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Holy Island

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HOLY ISLAND

A Lenten Pilgrimage

By

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Rector of the Church of the Ascension

New York City

Foreword by

THE RT. REV. HORACE W. B. DONEGAN, S.T.D.

Bishop of New York

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*To All Those
of
Little Faith
Especially One*

Foreword

LAUNCHING A BOOK

IN COMMENDING this book to the reader, I wish to take advantage of the analogy which Dr. Kennedy pictures in his title for Lent. If Lent may be described in the form of a Holy Island, then this book may well be regarded as the ship which will enable one to visit it, and my foreword as a form of launching.

This is a sturdy little ship, built on long-tested lines. The builder has traveled back and forth between the mainland and Holy Island often enough to know both the joys and the dangerous cross-currents of the passage, but it remains a voyage he loves.

The book is doubly fine for its inclusion of collects and prayers for all the days of Lent. They will help you to make the pilgrimage with understanding.

I wish you the same inspiration that I have had in reading this book. Were you to remember that I am writing seriously, then I might risk saying, "Bon Voyage!"

Holy Island is one of the most helpful devotional books that has appeared in recent years. It goes out with my prayers for God's blessing on all who shall read it.

HORACE W. B. DONEGAN
Bishop of New York

Preface

THIS book makes no pretense of originality or of presenting earth-shaking ideas. There is nothing new in it, for all of it has been said over and over again by many men in many books. But repetition is one of the laws of learning, and the same concepts expressed by different men in different periods of time from a fresh point of view have added, if not to man's total knowledge, at least to his grasp and more complete assimilation of that knowledge.

I am indebted to an article which appeared in *The National Geographic Magazine*, October, 1952, page 547, for my initial interest in Lindisfarne—England's Holy Island. John E. H. Nolan wrote of his "Pilgrimage to Holy Island and The Farnes" and provided a wonderful picture story to go along with it. In preparation for my own pilgrimage to this historic holy spot, I read *Guide to Holy Island*, by John W. Halliday, published by Andrew Reid and Co. Ltd., Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1951 edition. I wish to credit both these sources for whatever is descriptive and historical in this book concerning Lindisfarne.

All this vicarious pilgrimaging to Holy Island through reading was made real when, at last, I set foot on this hallowed spot and knew for myself what such a pilgrimage can mean. It is in the mood and remembrance of this visit that I write this book, especially the quiet of early mornings, when the tide was out, the birds were making small noises, and from far away came the first faint sound of the tide rolling in. On Holy Island I

realized that *Tomorrow Is Already Here* (the title of a book by Robert Jungk).

I am also indebted to several persons for the final form of this book: the Rt. Rev. Horace W. B. Donegan, Bishop of New York, who asked me to write it; Miss Elisabeth Morrow, who patiently transcribed the script and typed it several times; and my wife, who labored to make it more worthy. May their confidence and their care help you, too, make your Lenten pilgrimage vital.

JAMES W. KENNEDY

On Holy Island
Easter tide, 1957

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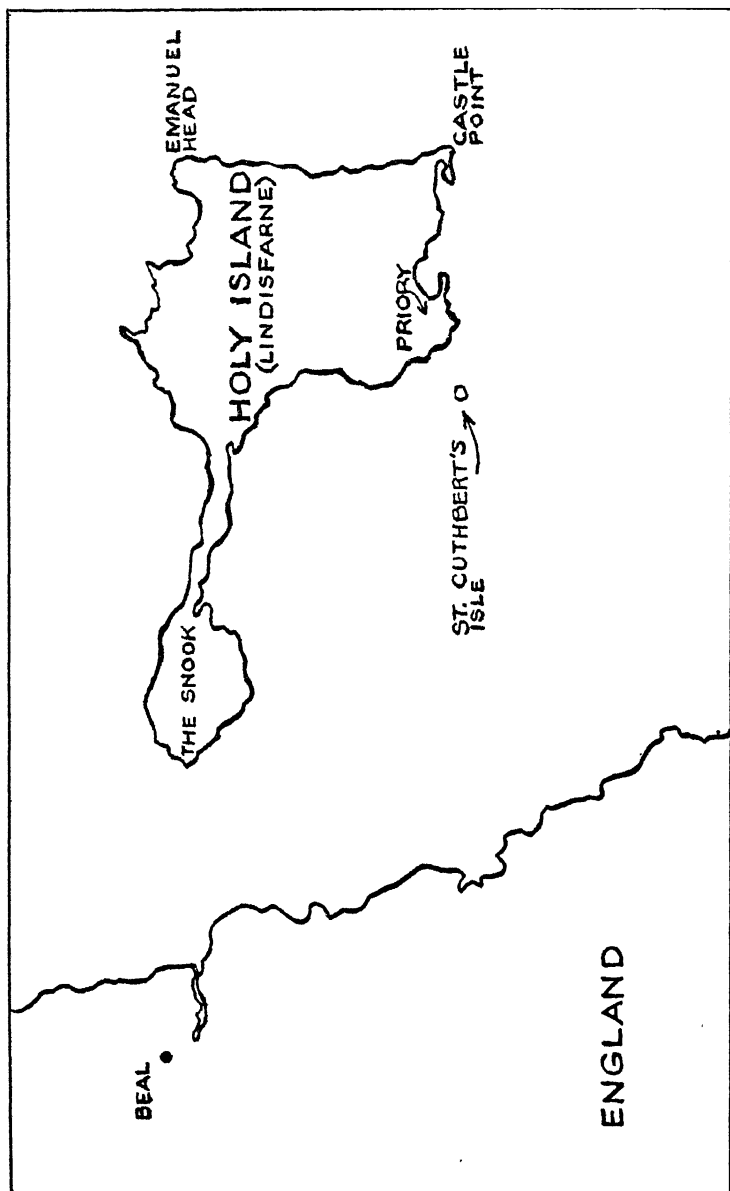
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Holy Island



Lindisfarne—England's Holy Island

A Word about Islands

ISLANDS have always fascinated men, and still do.¹ It is very tempting when one is buffeted by life in the world of men, or when one is confused and wearied by life's grim realities, to dream of an island apart from all the world's noise and strife. Perhaps one can actually flee to an island, in fact or fancy, provided he always remembers the words of John Donne, who has made us forever sure that "No man is an Iland, intire of itselfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine. . . ."²

There are at least *One Million Islands for Sale*³ or rent along the coasts and in the lakes and rivers of the United States and Canada alone, as Robert Froman learned when seeking one for himself. But very few will ever buy one or rent one or even visit one. Therefore, those who seek islands must resort to seasons like Lent, or books like this, to realize their desires.

Man cannot be an island or live on an island completely cut off from the life of his fellows, for he would soon become ingrown and unproductive, living artificially. But he can make pilgrimages to one, actually or in his mind, and can designate any time or place of apartness as his Holy Island of retreat and spiritual renewal, provided he does not remain too long there. Therefore, to inspire and direct such a seeker, who, in the very midst of life's rush, needs a quiet refuge for a time apart to keep

the meaning of his own life in proper focus, *Holy Island* was written.

Even in the middle of the busiest thoroughfare in the world, Broadway at Times Square in New York City, there are traffic islands where one may safely pause after plunging across a line of traffic, to catch one's breath before plunging through another endless line of cars and noise and poisonous exhaust fumes. But one cannot ask the meaning of life there and expect a coherent answer.

This book is an analogy between an actually existing island, once made holy by men who lived there, and the mental image of an island to which one can make pilgrimages at any time, where one may gain wholeness and true perspective, even as the bedlam of life dins in his ears.

Off the Northeastern coast of Great Britain there is a group of small islands dear to the hearts of all English Christian people since Saxon times. As the Flying Scotsman roars along the Northumbrian coast on the way to Edinburgh, between Beal and Berwick-on-Tweed, the passengers can catch a glimpse of the nearest of these islands, unless a "sea fret" mists over the coastland. For centuries the largest of this group of islands, known as The Farnes, was called Lindisfarne, from the words *lindis*, the name of the expanse of tidewater one must cross to reach it, and *fahren*, which means a recess or place of retreat.

It was from this very spot that St. Aidan, St. Cuthbert, and countless other Christians carried the light of the Gospel to England from A.D. 635 to 875, until the Danes came and destroyed the first tiny thatched church and slew many of the island's inhabitants. Since that long-ago time, Lindisfarne has been known as "Holy Island," holy to the memory of those devoted and courageous saints of God.

In the eleventh century a Norman church was built there, and

the mission station flourished again. Although the ancient church is now in ruins and the North Sea no longer keeps a lonely saint company as he prays on some sea-washed rock, pilgrims still visit this sacred spot and keep Holy Island alive as a shrine. The legacy of the centuries on this tiny island remains to inspire all who seek in this twentieth century for a place of withdrawal for quiet reflection.

Any period of apartness for soul refreshment can be likened to a Holy Island, whether it be a season within the round of the Church year—like Advent, Lent, or Ember Days—a conducted retreat or quiet day, or one's own private devotions. Those who are in the world, and who must of necessity live uncloistered lives, need a quiet place where their souls can catch up and be refreshed for return into the thick of life. One never remains for long on his Holy Island. The length of stay is dictated by the need.

All men need periods of withdrawal from time to time far removed from the turmoil, pressure, and hurry of the world, to get their bearings straight in silence, and to hear God speak to their special need. This seagirt Holy Island of Lindisfarne is just the place for such a retreat. It is actually cut off from the mainland for only a few hours at a time, at high tide, twice a day, and then connects with it again with predictable regularity. All who wish may use Lent as a Holy Island and find themselves both cut off and accessible, both in the world and apart from it, practising the rhythm of the spiritual life. Any season of the Church year, a summer vacation, or a fleeting crossover in a moment of crisis, can become a time of apartness for a long or short look at the interior life and can be for men a Holy Island in space or time.

Think, then, of such a Holy Island of apartness where we can be shut off from the world for a time of quiet with God, for

learning more about Him and His way for us, at last to return to the world refreshed, strengthened, and straightened, better able to find wholeness and completeness within, fulfilling the purpose of our lives in God's plan. In this way anyone may find an island which does not separate him from the mainland of the world, but helps him better to fit himself for living in the world.⁴

Lent comes once a year and can be used as a Holy Island⁵ where men take time to go apart and ponder afresh the age-old theme of the love of God as revealed in and through Jesus Christ, and seek new ways as to how they can more fully share in that love.

As pilgrims, then, move on toward Holy Island, seeking directions for a way over and what to do once you are across.

*Merciful Father, forgive us for all our neglect, lukewarmness, undisciplined thoughts and actions over the swift-passing days. At this moment of beginning a season of special prayer, study, and bodily discipline, give us the desire to be made clean and strong within and to give ourselves earnestly to the labors and care which will bring our desires and thoughts and feelings into one with Thy will for us. This day we make our covenant with Thee and ask for strength and guidance to mend, to give up, and to grow, through obedience to Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

* All prayers not otherwise marked are from the author's prayers in the series of the syndicated "Prayer for Today," and are used by permission of the Division of Christian Education, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

Lent Begins

ASH WEDNESDAY

Satan's Power Underfoot

LEGEND says that when Satan raised his giant battle-ax against Heaven's gates, God's shaft of lightning struck it from his hand. The flaming ax fell into the North Sea and was changed into the thousand-acre isle of Lindisfarne. Through the centuries this bit of lore concerning God's victory inspired those who lived on, or visited, this island, to keep Satan's power underfoot.

One of man's special spiritual needs is a place like this Holy Island, where he can wrestle with the evil forces which beset him and would conquer him. Man is still seeking God's help in keeping Satan's power underfoot. The battleground need not be a gloomy vale of tears and darkness, but a holy place of joy. And the disciplines of the fray do not demand "farewell to alleluia," for, above the noise of battle, the trumpets of God's victory sound. As good and evil struggle for the control of men's lives, two weapons come to hand for the fight, namely, fasting and prayer. Men go to Lindisfarne, the Holy Island, first of all to conquer the temptations which so quickly, continuously, and easily beset them, and to strengthen and refresh their spiritual life.

Lent is the kind of Holy Island to which men make pilgrimages with joy, not sadness. Whatever men do on their brief

retreats to Holy Island, the mood of their stay must not match the ancient gloomy precedent of such a season, stemming from the sixth century.

When the Lombards invaded Italy, about A.D. 568, all Christians were called on to observe a special season of fasting and prayer; but the invasion lasted so long some of the special supplications used became fixed in the liturgy of the Church and remained to give Lent a sad and melancholy face. By the ninth century there was actually a service, widely used on the eve of this penitential season, called "Farewell to Alleluia."

When the pages of Church history are turned even further back, Lent is found to have been a joyful time when alleluia was the accepted theme and worshipers stood for the prayers to show their joy, because of Christ who loved them enough to give His life for them and who had redeemed them from their miserable condition of ignorance of what God was like. Before the sixth century the Passion and Resurrection of Christ were parts of the whole and Ash Wednesday was the starting point for a pre-Easter season, with the emphasis on Resurrection. The same spirit should prevail today among Christians who use Lent as a Holy Island.

Fasting is a weapon for Christians to use against the temptations and vanities of the world, the lusts of the flesh and the disposition, and all the other evils which bedevil men without ceasing. But fasting, ashes, and repentance are all related. The Scripture readings for Ash Wednesday show how the three stand together as parts of one whole, like a three-edged weapon.

"Turn ye even to me, saith the Lord, with all your heart, and with fasting . . . and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness. . . ."¹

"When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance:

for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast."²

Only God sees men on Holy Island as they "fight the good fight with all their might" against spiritual foes. Therefore, men need no ashes heaped upon their heads or sad countenances to show their inner sorrow and what they are striving to do about it. Before men win any other spiritual victory they must win out against the great temptation, "the luxury of cheap melancholy," which is only a superficial display of sorrow and fasting with no roots or wrestlings to it.

"When thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father. . . ."³

Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

Fasting as Abstemiousness

Look more closely at the meaning of fasting, since in one way or another this discipline enters into every visit made to Holy Island and ministers to the spiritual life. While the severe and extreme practice of fasting was common on Holy Island in the distant past, when St. Cuthbert and his brother monks could give themselves over to it as their life work, it

must be a tool fashioned to meet the challenge of today's life in order to become of value for Christians in this modern world.

Fasting is a much larger word than it is usually credited with being and may be used devotionally in at least four senses: (1) as abstemiousness, a bodily discipline; (2) as a means of increasing the pace of spiritual growth; (3) as taking a firmer grip on faith; and (4) as a more deeply and permanently dyed evidence of spiritual stature.

(1) Fasting as a bodily discipline means *abstemiousness*. The body must be kept under if the soul is to grow. Men pamper and overindulge the body in almost every conceivable way until at last they must call a halt (on their own initiative or by a doctor's orders) and seek to exercise more control over bodily appetites and exertions. For the glutton and the winebibber who indulge inordinately in food and drink, fasting means moderation. For one in bondage to a bad habit, fasting is the strenuous labor of breaking that habit. When a day or a season of fasting is observed, when the body is disciplined by telling it what it shall have and do rather than letting it do the dictating, the fast is kept and men are better for it. The Church provides a table of fasts in the Book of Common Prayer, days "on which the Church requires such a measure of abstinence as is more especially suited to extraordinary acts and exercises of devotion."⁴ On fast days the body is deprived in order to benefit the soul. This can mean abstaining from meat, according to ancient custom; or it can mean abstaining from fish, if one is inordinately fond of it, as an exercise in self-discipline. Almsgiving is also to the fore, as one seeks to save in certain areas of unnecessary spending, even to the point of sacrificing something greatly desired, in order to give the money saved for use in spreading Christ's Kingdom.

Lent offers many chances for practising such self-denial. It

is much easier to fast during this season since it is the general practice of the whole Church, and many others are joining in. To accept certain needed disciplines, so that bodily matters will not interfere with nor dominate the affairs of the soul, is important for all. This involves abstinence, abstemiousness, temperateness: in eating, drinking, spending, and in every other area which has gotten out of hand or out of control. Such a fast means tightening up former laxity in such matters, giving up what is harmful, nonessential, or less essential, so that time, money, and physical strength may be used for more important matters. To fast in this sense means making more time for God, taking on whatever disciplines may be required.

O God, for another day, we thank Thee; may its hours pass by swiftly, but not so fast as to leave us helpless in the flow of things; let the minutes and hours find us ready for the work to be done; help us make the most of the endless opportunities to serve and to love; may every contact this day bring new happiness and new knowledge; keep us near to Thee through all the day, and, no matter what hours have been spent or remain to be spent, keep Thou near to us. Amen.

FRIDAY

A Quickening

(2) Fasting as the means of *quickenings spiritual growth* during a withdrawal to Holy Island, acts like a shot of vitamin B₁ at the roots of a wilting plant to give it new life. The season of Lent provides many stimulants for speeding up spiritual growth. Extra services of worship become small islands

for frequent and quick visits, like the many islands, adjacent to Lindisfarne, labeled by such quaint names as Megstone, Crumstone, Little Harcar, and Glorum Shad. The monks of yore sought these isolated spots as places of retreat, even from the cloisters of Holy Island, as an additional discipline for aiding spiritual growth. Likewise early celebrations, afternoon litanies, services of music, an open church offering sanctuary, and other opportunities for worship may be used for allowing one's soul to expand.⁵ Men find, when they seek for them, windows opening to a larger life through the words of worship—in the Bible, or in the Book of Common Prayer.

One can also participate in a variety of study opportunities in certain neglected areas of the religious life, selecting from a rich store of serious reading matter designed for the season and for developing the interior life usually starved for just such fare. Most parishes give suggestions about books which can provide a rich and stimulating Lenten reading fare. In some parishes Lenten Book Clubs are formed, where several persons band together for reading, discussing, and growing spiritually through sharing.

The pilgrim will check frequently to see that "this work [of spiritual growth] goeth fast on, and prospereth."⁶ Fasting in Lent can mean, then, speeding up, getting a move on, realizing "the time is at hand"⁷ for stirring up the wills of all faithful people and for producing visible evidences of the answer to the confirmation prayer, "daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more."⁸

PRAYER FOR WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

O Lord, our Father, we thank Thee for the great gift of faith which Thou hast given us because of Thy eternal love, but which we keep in earthen vessels. Thou alone knowest the many temptations and sins

which assault our faith so that it remains weak and powerless.

Lord, forgive us, we pray, that our thoughts seek Thee so seldom, that matters of this world loom so large in our minds and hearts and fill them with fear, that our courage fails to follow in Thy steps.

Lord, we beseech Thee, increase our faith that our lives may grow in power and usefulness, renew our first love of Thee, let not our trust in Thee be shaken by adversity or suffering, let not our obedience fail.

*We humbly beseech Thee, grant us steadfastness in waiting for Thy promises, give us the patience of hope which is set on Thee alone. Show us Thy mercy that we may anew glorify Thy name. Amen.**

SATURDAY

Grasp Faith More Strongly

(3) Fasting is also used to get a *firmer grip on faith*. When men strengthen their staying powers, so that temptation does not pull them away from their intent, and never give up their striving to increase their spiritual stature and deepen their interior life, they are truly making fast to anchor that which has been given to them of the Way of life. But bodily discipline and spiritual growth must lead to another aspect of this third point, namely, to resist successfully the temptation to grow weary of well doing and chuck the whole business. When a bad habit has been conquered, men cannot cease their vigilance. When

* From World Day of Prayer Service, March 8, 1957, "From Behind the Iron Curtain."

men have established a daily time of devotion, they must never grow lax.

Lent is a time of stock-taking and concentration on getting a firmer grip on the essentials of Christian faith; and the framework of reference is the Apostles' Creed, especially as given in its summary form in the "Offices of Instruction." This creedal statement is prefaced by the words "I learn to believe." In Lent men learn more firmly and completely to believe in "God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world; in God the son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind; in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the people of God."⁹

Evelyn Underhill has a wonderfully compelling study of the Nicene Creed and its relationship to the inner life. Her small book of meditations, *The School of Charity*,¹⁰ is rich and vivid reading for one who bases his spiritual life on a solid belief in God's revelation of Himself in Christ and His continuing presence.

Fasting reaches deep into the inner life and, in this area of holding more firmly to one's faith, provides an anchor to windward, so that one shall no longer be subject to this ebb and flow of the tides of life nor be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."¹¹

O God, we thank Thee for the gift of speech, that we may communicate one with another about Thee, and make known Thy gift of eternal life through Thy Son Jesus Christ. Help us to use our voices divinely; inspire and control our tongues. Gear our speech slow enough for wisdom, but fast enough to catch and hold attention; and give our words power enough to be convincing. So help us to further the coming of Thy Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Week of Lent

I SUNDAY

Evidences of Spiritual Growth

FINALLY, (4) fasting is used to obtain *more deeply dyed evidence of spiritual stature*. The lasting results, the outward and visible consequences of such a chosen fast, must indicate that those who have chosen it have been deeply and permanently dyed by their experience. If fasting has been freely accepted and truly kept, the color and tone of the spiritual gains will not fade under the glare of the noonday sun of testing and temptation.

Any season of fasting is kept in order to bring forth a more Christlike life. Such days apart in quiet, struggling with stubborn selfishness, remind of St. Cuthbert's Duck, which breeds on Lindisfarne and may be seen there all the year around. There is an analogy here between the forty days of Lenten discipline and the twenty-eight days the female duck sits on her eggs. During this time she eats nothing; she lives off her own fat. She fasts to bring forth more life. St. Cuthbert fasted in order to bring forth a more Christlike life. So must all who fast.

The acceptance of fasting in any form, and keeping that fast, whether to discipline the body, to get a move on spiritually,

to hang on more tightly to one's faith, or to realize an unfading experience of Christ, makes unforgettable any trip to Holy Island; and the pilgrim returns to the world more alive, better nourished, calm and refreshed, able to make good "his first avowed intent to be a pilgrim."¹

Let everyone's avowed intent this Lent be to fast from over-criticalness, from self-pity, from ill-temper, from resentment, from jealousy, from pride, from selfishness, from faithless fear, from worldly anxieties, and from whatever else dwarfs and hurts the soul. For such fasting leads to feasting on praise, on joy, on peace, on contentment, on love, on humility, on service, and on faith. Check your Lenten Rule to see if it covers all the disciplines of fasting.

Fasting, almsgiving, and prayer are inseparable and are needed to keep Satan underfoot, for he is always squirming and twisting to get free. If, like St. Cuthbert and his cloistered brothers on Holy Island, men are to hold to the disciplines of fasting and almsgiving, they must heed Christ's admonition to all pilgrims and wayfarers, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."² For only so can this lonely warfare against rebellious self, which refuses to be denied without giving battle, be fought successfully, so that self is put in its proper place, and no longer blocks off God.³

O Lord, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights; Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness, and true holiness, to thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

I MONDAY

. . . *And Prayer*

The monkish saints who dwelt on and peopled Lindisfarne gave themselves regularly to the discipline of prayer, as well as fasting. They prayed at set times in their thatched cathedral (replaced later with a Gothic structure, the remains of which are still standing); they also prayed at odd moments, each in his favorite cave or on his favorite rock. In prayer they found spiritual sustenance for a rugged life and spiritual power so contagious that all England was at last touched by it. They took literally Jesus' command "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."⁴

Constant prayer was the secret of their holiness, and from such frequent, almost continuous, times of prayer, came their love, patience, courage, and zeal which made Holy Island memorable. In this long line of saints and martyrs and humble men of God are many exceptional men who prayed on the heights. As one today looks on the life of those he knows and on his own life, he realizes how seldom most men really pray. Even many of those who are willing to pray are seldom able to, for they know not how.

The atmosphere of prayer can be discovered on a visit to Lindisfarne, or by a walk through the quiet ruins of a holy place like Fountains Abbey. The spell of such places of prayer still holds those who walk there, surrounding them with a sense of God's presence. They are carried back through the centuries to the time when such an abbey was a flourishing place and men were happily engaged in productive, creative

work, and in prayer. How wonderfully men must have prayed in such undisturbed spots apart from the world. The very atmosphere of stillness found in such a place as Fountains Abbey, in a beautiful vale by a swift-flowing stream underneath the delicate tracery of Gothic walls, must have made it easier for men to pray there. Hours were spent on their knees. Indeed, apart from the necessary chores and artistic requirements of living, prayer was their sole business. One still feels the very presence of God as he walks in such a place.

Ancient stones, like those in stately and impressive ruins at Fountains Abbey and on Holy Island, must be encrusted with the prayers of the faithful monks of yore. That is one reason people still visit such places as hallowed ground and gain from them long-remembered inspiration. What a contrast between those saints of God and men today! They prayed so constantly. Men now so rarely pray at all. The monks must have had their moments of doubt and spells of coldness, but they kept everlastingly at it.

Certainly all the praying in England was not done by monks apart in such hallowed spots as Fountains Abbey or Lindisfarne, even at the height of the monastic age. Many ordinary men knew how to pray then; and ordinary men can now. Most of those who read this know in their hearts how faithfully they have attended Church services and shared in the great prayers of the Prayer Book, and in private have said their own prayers with some degree of regularity. But I ask them to look for a moment both at public and private prayer, in the light of the ending of John Keble's familiar hymn:

And help us, this and every day,
To live more nearly as we pray.⁵

The real reason for men coming together in corporate worship is to respond in the deepest possible way to the Eternal God

in whom they place their trust. However they come, usually immersed in the world of things, gradually their unpromising condition is transmuted as the service unfolds and they begin to respond to some aspect of Reality, some incitement of God, however dimly understood and imperfectly obeyed. In any humble response to the presence of God is the beginning of that love which manifests itself as hope and faith. As St. Ignatius said, "contemplation [is] to procure the love of God." Worship changes men. They are fed by the presence of the living God revealed to them in Christ.

Many Americans have been brought up under the long extemporary pastoral prayer of the very informal Protestant service of worship and, even as children, were faintly disturbed by it. It was formless, graceless, repetitious, always "telling" God, quite obviously a technique for speaking to the people in the pews as well as to God. To many it seemed sacrilegious, as if God did not know all these things. Much of our public prayer life is shaped to be heard of men and not of God—closed-eyes sermons, not prayer at all.

The beautiful, time-tested prayers of the Prayer Book are like manna after all this. But the "incomparable liturgy" can become so common and familiar that the responses in corporate worship are quite as meaningless as the extemporary, unrehearsed pastoral prayer.

The Catholic tradition bids men pray with these positive words: "Let us pray." The Protestant tradition often poses a question: "Shall we pray?" But for both there can be an emptiness—in hollow extemporary praying and in liturgical routine droning. Everything depends on the worshiper's response.

It is a great privilege to respond to the God whom men come to worship. How else can anyone know God has touched him as His own?

O Almighty God, who into the place of the traitor Judas didst choose thy faithful servant Matthias to be of the number of the twelve Apostles; Grant that thy Church, being alway preserved from false Apostles, may be ordered and guided by faithful and true pastors; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR ST. MATTHIAS' DAY

I TUESDAY

Prayer and Words

As men study the lives of those who have prayed through the centuries and read their contemplations, they are inspired to make their own practice of private prayer more continuous and fruitful. But as Thomas à Kempis wrote in *The Imitation of Christ*, "Truly in the day of judgment, we shall not be examined as to what we have *read* but as to what we have done. . . ." In *reading* the great devotional classics men learn straight off that these saints of God *labored* night and day to be more perfect pilgrims and instruments of the Divine Will.

The great Christian men and women of prayer have always looked upon prayer as a *response* to the ceaseless outpouring of love and concern with which God lays siege to every soul. Prayer for them is always a response to the prior love of God. It is almost like opening a door and finding God has been there all the time, waiting for us to open it and let Him in. But prayer takes time and must needs find privacy. And yet the very depth of man's sense of need and desire will help him find a place for a time of daily quiet, apart with God.

Words are not needed. We do not even need to kneel. All we

need to do is to realize we are in the presence of God and offer Him our minds and hearts as receptive instruments. We may pour out our needs before God. We may offer another's needs to Him. We may simply wait upon God. But we are seeking for God's will in order to do it. Preoccupation often makes it difficult to remove self from the center and let God be there. We find that prayer, which is usually thought of as an oblation (an offering of self), is also hospitality. Intercessory prayer means for one to offer his own being for another and also take another into his being.

What we are asked to do daily in prayer is to yield ourselves to God and no longer try to manipulate life for our own ends; to abide in Him that His words shall abide in us—so His will may be done.

It is quite true that, for class instruction, prayer is often broken down into categories like adoration, confession, thanksgiving, intercession, and petition—and these are natural divisions; but what it all adds up to is that whenever we pray we must allow enough time with God each day to find the communion and direction which are the indispensable food and drink for our souls.

Grant to us all this day, dear Lord, enough sense to see what is right and to practise it, to recognize what is wrong and to avoid it, to yearn for and work for the best and happiest relationships with all whom we shall meet, and may "the trumpets that sound in the morning" for us be heard as far as we walk, speak, and reach; and, good Lord, keep us free from all narrowness, pettiness, and self-sensitiveness, so that Thy joy may abound in us and touch others. Amen.

I WEDNESDAY

Prayer in Private

Private prayer poses the same difficulties as public prayer. It seems to grow increasingly more difficult for modern man to pray in the traditional way. He has less time and less privacy; he is too intellectual and too afraid of emotion, and he seldom prays, except in time of crisis when all men pray. And yet fewer psychiatrists would be needed to deal with the inner conflicts of men if the habit of prayer were better established in all men, who, like the saints of yore, would pray more consistently.

An intimate searching of man's heart reveals a biting hunger for reality in prayer, even though he finds many excuses at hand for not praying either corporately or privately, or he experiences discouragement like that expressed in these lines in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner":

I look'd to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.⁶

Evelyn Underhill, who explored the depths of prayer and worship beyond even that which many "saints" experienced, maintains that "prayer and worship are not equivalent."⁷ Prayer "asks," she says, while worship "offers." Worship means "only God." Prayer means "without Thee I cannot live."⁸ The pilgrim begins saying "without Thee I cannot live" and ends knowing "only God."

Until mid-July, 1934, life was fairly routine for a certain man. He was already ordained; he read the Bible daily; he knelt for his prayers, and his religious life seemed quite adequate. Then he had a serious airplane crash and almost lost his life. For many months he had no regular time for Bible reading; he could not kneel for prayer. About all he could utter was "My God" when the pain was bad. Or "Thank God" when he realized he would not lose his eye or his leg. Or "Into Thy hands I commit myself" when he had to face another operation or treatment. Prayer became for him an acknowledgment of God's nearness, God's goodness, and God's ability to do what was best for him without any suggestion from him. His entire prayer life was different because of this experience. So often men cry out for miracles of healing when all they need is to entrust themselves to God's loving care.

Each day, John Wentworth, the vicar in *The Rosemary Tree*, went to the village church to say his daily office. Each day he would resolve to have a better prayer time. "Prayer today would be no dry wilderness. He would be able today to pour himself out in wordless adoration, without distractions, without encroachment, in perfect abandonment of will and libation of love. This was on his good mornings, but on his disastrous mornings . . . the whole business of intercessory prayer became no more than an arid discipline. Words, words, words. Why had he ever thought that they had any beauty? Each was as dry as dust as he forced himself on through them. Blast this toothache."⁹

Little things do distract, and yet men must persevere before the rewards of discipline come.

Prayer is more trust than utterance, more an attitude of heart and mind than of body. When Jesus heard the disciples plead with Him, "Lord, teach us to pray,"¹⁰ He gave them the "Lord's

Prayer." Did He mean for this formula to be repeated endlessly to be sure His followers would be praying correctly? Most assuredly not. In these words Jesus gave the substance, meaning, and technique of Christian prayer.

"When ye pray . . ." ¹¹ pray to this kind of God and remember to consider with Him three things: His will, your bodily needs, and your relationships. When you pray, say "Our Father, . . . lead us." ¹² Prayer is keeping in touch with God and making a commitment to Him who provides guidance and strength and whatever else is needed for life.

Most of those who drop petitions in parish "Intercession Boxes" need to do their own praying as well and to ask, "O God, show me what to do and give me the strength to do it," then wait for the answer. Take an unforgiving attitude when forgiveness is the only solution. There is an inner compulsion in men to mend broken relationships, but most of them are too proud to take the first step. God says, take the step. And whenever men obey, the rift is soon mended, and they move on with joy.

Good Lord, send us such a measure of Thy goodness that all our contacts may leave behind a bit of Thy presence and glory. As the day moves from start to finish, keep us alert and ready to seize upon every chance to speak a good word in Thy name. Let no obstacle frighten us; and help us to discern and minister to the need and to bring out the good in each person we meet. Amen.

I THURSDAY

Christ at the Center

Anyone could make up a symposium on prayer, ranging from a simple poem called "A Prayer is Such a Sunny Thing" to one of Søren Kierkegaard's prayers, or one could make a thousand different interviews to find out how others pray, without gaining one single practical insight for himself. Men can never learn much about prayer until they begin seriously to pray and keep at it, even when nothing seems to happen.

On a visit to Kronberg Castle in Germany, a tourist had a room near the tower clock which struck the hours and the quarter hours. Day and night the small tinkle called his mind and heart to prayer and he could almost put himself in the prayer pattern of those monks on Holy Island, where the monastic hours were filled with prayer and praise from Prime to Compline.

Some of the prayers of the saints remain to inspire and guide men today, such as the Prayer of St. Chrysostom.¹³ But the greatest need is to take more seriously one's own corporate and private prayer life so that every man may pray more frequently and more perfectly as did the saints who knew God and lived obedient to His will.

John Keble set the goal: "to live more nearly as we pray." But first men must pray.

The reason the monks on Holy Island placed a rude sandstone cross at the very center of their community was to remind them

that Christ must ever be placed at the center of each life. This Saxon cross stood for centuries defying the ravages of time and, even though the rough stone base is all that remains of the original today, it still bears mute but eloquent testimony to those who prayed there, and serves to remind men who pray in any place that Christ is at the center of their prayer life.

St. Cuthbert's Cross, planted deep in the heart of Holy Island, and the Rainbow Arch of the ancient church still standing, remind pilgrims of the lasting beauty of the spiritual life, defying the ravages of time, and the place of prayer in sparking life lived with such contagion and power. The rhythm of each time of prayer apart on Holy Island is expressed in Sir Walter Scott's poem:

The tide did now its flood-mark gain,
And girdled in the Saint's domain;
For, with the flow and ebb, its stile
Varies from continent to isle;
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;
Twice every day the waves efface,
Of staves and sandalled feet the trace.¹⁴

Therefore, "pray without ceasing"¹⁵ and maintain the rhythm of the devout life. Come to absorb from God, go to give to others, never forgetting that temptations and trials beset everyone without warning. "Sea frets" often quickly surround men, fogging their vision, and they need daily, frequent times apart with Him. The rocks and caves which abound on Holy Island are symbols of the strength to be found in the hidden times and places of prayer. For those who visit Holy Island and place Christ at the heart of life, life is a walking prayer.

*O Lord, this is the day which Thou hast made, let us
rejoice and be glad in it. When temptations come to*

yield to bickering tendencies and mournful complainings, let us remember Thy gift of life and give ourselves to living it fully rather than spoiling and wasting it; so help us to honor Thy Name through all this day and the waking hours of this night, and may our walk and words bring joy. Amen.

I FRIDAY

Thanks-Giving

On Holy Island prayer and thanks-giving go hand in hand. In addition to praying more regularly and faithfully, men must catch up on their thanks-giving and teach their negligent hearts to pour out alleluias for all the blessings of this life. Their lives are often in ruins, like the ancient Priory, with only a faint hint of the proper form and grandeur once in evidence. Through the practice of prayer and thanksgiving, they can be set on their way back to glory, like some valley of dry bones slowly reconstructed and reclothed with flesh.

The theme of thanksgiving runs through the Sacrament of Holy Communion and through all of worship, public and private, as a cord with binding power. Through thanksgiving the worshipers are bound more closely to Him whom men worship, even Jesus Christ in whom they find this oneness fully expressed. It is in this experience that men find the very essence of religion, which is to bind God and man forever together so there will be no apartness.

Praise and gratitude and thanksgiving—expressed in “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” in giving glory and in prayer, in endless alleluias, in creating beauty out of glass and stone and

precious metal—have furnished the zeal for man's response to God all through the centuries. This is worship, a response to the "outpouring of the loveliness of God."¹⁶ The outward manifestation of thankfulness, gratitude expressed in the poor gift of self given in return for His unspeakably rich gift of life, especially His life in Christ Jesus, is also worship, seeking "only God."

Every act or feeling or thought of thanksgiving is filled with happiness and joy. When men catch the vision of God in reality and fullness, in the words of Bishop Serapion, "The very dust becomes happy in the contemplation of His Glory."¹⁷ Or, as the mystic Ruysbroeck puts it, "I must rejoice without ceasing, although the world shudder at my joy."¹⁸ Or, as Brother Lawrence discovered, even in the drudgery of the scullery his heart was so full of love and thanksgiving for Almighty God that the rattle of the pans became a hymn-tune and the swish of the water on the hard, cold stone an anthem in praise of Him.¹⁹

There is joy in thanksgiving—joy in God's creation, the wonder and beauty of it; joy over the fruits of the earth, symbolized and localized in bread and wine; joy over God's redemption wrought by Jesus Christ. No wonder the service of Holy Communion is called the *Eucharist*, which means literally "thanksgiving," and is bursting with offerings, alms, and oblations, as tangible evidence of Christian love. Men can give without loving, but they cannot love without giving, of self and substance.

Men are reminded of their debt to God and the need for the continual returning to give thanks in such words as these:

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him.²⁰

Lift up your hearts. . . . Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.²¹

As men pour out their hearts' alleluia, they "give thanks for all men" and pray for "all who are in need," indeed for all mankind.

This spirit of thanksgiving and joy springs from faith and hope and must find expression in some act, some outward sign or manifestation of the inward thoughts and feelings. *Thank* and *think* are from the same root. The conscious recognition of God's good gifts fills men so full of thanks and gratitude their hearts overflow. There is always a spill-over to thanksgiving.

But in the story of the ten lepers cleansed, men are reminded that only one returned to give thanks. Is that the usual percentage? What this story tells man is that it is easy to forget to be thankful. Therefore the emphasis on Holy Island is on thanks-giving. But there are those who think they have nothing to be thankful for. One device which has been the turning point for others in despair is to write a thank-you note every morning to someone before the day's work begins. Even those who are at the bottom of despair have come up with names of persons to whom they can write thank-you notes.

Another good habit, when thanks-giving is difficult, is to attend an early morning celebration of the Lord's Supper and seek help from Him. That is why pilgrims constantly refer to the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and seek to make their communions, for "he who truly enters into eucharistic worship cannot be indifferent to hunger, bad housing, crippled children, and other social and material evils."²²

Dear Lord and Father of us all, forgive our foolish ways; mend the breaks and relieve the tensions we have caused in our relationships; clothe our minds with wisdom so we may make a right judgment in all things;

strengthen us to stand up against injustice; humble us to the point of graciousness; and so fill us with thy Holy Spirit that we may ever make known Thy love and Truth, through our words and actions of thanksgiving. Amen.

I SATURDAY

Lips Not Kept Silent

On a small rock or islet some one hundred and fifty to two hundred yards southwest of Holy Island, the foundations of a chapel, supposed to have been used as a retreat by St. Cuthbert, may be traced. The Venerable Bede of Durham in his writings describes it thus: "A place more distant from the monastery, surrounded on every side by the returning waves of the sea." The Chapel was very small, the dimensions being approximately twenty-four feet by twelve, with walls two and a half feet thick. It was all he needed as a place to celebrate the Eucharist. This site marked the cell which the saintly hermit divided into two parts. One part served as living quarters, the other as his prayer room. What better division of worldly work and living and apartness in prayer and thanksgiving could there be than this half worldly, half mystical, existence?

Times of worship enable men to take notice of those special moments when thankfulness overwhelms them—a wedding, a birth, a death (for the blessed remembrance of that which cannot be lost or taken away). All such experiences of thanksgiving are times when mind and heart are lifted up as an offering to God, and they produce a better working interrelationship between God and man, between man and man, between the cloisters and the uncloistered world.

Contrast the difference between the swelling happiness of a thankful heart and the bitterness and aridity of an unthankful heart.

Thanksgiving is both general and specific. There is the General Thanksgiving at Morning and Evening Prayer. There are suggestions for special thanksgivings in The Book of Common Prayer.²³ There is a special prayer of thanksgiving at the conclusion of the Service of Holy Communion.²⁴ These should be used more frequently, with a full consciousness of their meaning.

The doctrine of thanksgiving, fully embodied in the Eucharist, is an attitude of mind and a feeling, leading to action. Therefore, "the personal response of the individual life follows the great rhythm of the Church's liturgical life. It too is Eucharistic."²⁵ Because of this acute sense of thankfulness in His presence there ensues "loving subordination to God, a quiet acceptance of 'the sacrament of the present moment' as a major means of grace, whatever its form."²⁶

In thanksgiving men find one of the secrets locked in the ruins of the old Priory on Holy Island and recapture some of the beauty of prayer and praise practised by those holy men whose hearts never ceased to pour out alleluias in thanksgiving to God. Men should be so thankful for God's gifts that they take "the stuff of every-day temporal existence" and make it holy by offering it to God, "so that it may be accepted, changed, and become the life-giving stuff of eternal experience."²⁷ This must be done not in the interest of the individual entirely, but in order to further the creative purpose of God, to open a channel for His Spirit, and so contribute to the redemption and transfiguration of life. "Each separate life of worship, whatever its outward expression, in so far as it is truly cleansed of egoism and bent upon God, is part of this one eternal Eucharistic action

of the *Logos* incarnate in the world: and this fact strips the Christian life of prayer of all petty subjectivism, all tendency to mere religious self-culture, and confers upon it the dignity of the Real.”²⁸

Men must be thankful for being fed on the spiritual food of His presence for the nourishing of their souls, for receiving sufficient grace to continue in the Christian fellowship and to live in the world. They must be most thankful for the gift to them of God’s beloved Son and “pray fervently, labor diligently, and give liberally”²⁹ to make Him known. And He is made known as men live out in His service the deep abiding thankfulness inspired by His love.

We thank Thee, O God, for this day and the opportunities for growth and service it contains; keep us from miffing our opportunities to be kind; make us sensitive to the needs of others and sensitize us to the point where we do not mind little stings; in times of uncertainty let us lean upon Thee and find the way to walk and the word to say, in harmony with Thy will for us. Amen.

Second Week of Lent

II SUNDAY

God's Graciousness

FOR THOSE who pray, spoken or written prayers are not absolutely essential. But, to guide one's praying, a form of words is often helpful to cover more accurately the intention. Such prayers are available in *The Hymnal 1940*, *The Book of Common Prayer*, and in many excellent collections.

Some years ago the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. began a syndicated feature called "Prayer for Today," with the intention of providing a simply-worded guide for those who pray which would be brief, to the point, and which would speak to some one need each day. While the classic prayers of the Church will never be supplanted, men's praying can be stimulated and clarified by the use of words in the modern idiom. That is why a variety of prayers have been included in this book for the days of Lent, in addition to the Prayer Book collects.

There are additional prayers in the section "Extra Prayers for Any Day" and a caption has been provided to indicate the focal point of each prayer. All of these prayers have appeared in the syndicated series "Prayer for Today." Each prayer is designed to speak to a specific moment or day in a person's life.

Of course, one prayer voiced silently or aloud does not mean one is praying. The praying actually begins when, by God's help, we begin to live out the intention of the words in a new life, reconciled to our neighbors, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth more nearly in His holy

ways. Only then will "the grace [the graciousness] of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore."

The Gateway to the ancient Priory on Lindisfarne has been restored, and all who gaze upon it or walk through it can see the splendor which was there in the beginning and gain some understanding of what it means to have one's life restored through prayer and thanksgiving.

So pray and give thanks, on or off your Holy Island, for prayer to the Christian is a mandatory discipline which brings insight and courage in its wake. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."¹

Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

II MONDAY

Litany of Life

Hundreds of pilgrims each year wade across oozing North Sea sands to visit Holy Island. This island center of early Christianity in Northern England lies in the churning sea, edged by sharp, rocky promontories and treacherous reefs. Some twenty-five small satellite islands dot the rough waters for several miles out to sea. About half of them are under water

at high tide. As the tide rolls in and rolls out with unceasing regularity, it covers and uncovers the solid points of the rocky, smaller islands in The Farnes cluster, playing a "now you see it, now you don't" game.

The tides reminded the monks of the antiphonal form of the Litany with the exposed land "calling" the surging sea and the rushing waters coming in to "answer" it. Christian life is like this, visible and invisible by turns. The Litany, with its concern for all the conditions of men, voices man's petition and response. Men go to Holy Island to have this experience of ebb and flow of life, in the world, yet out of the world, exposed, then hidden, and they need a form to express the rhythm of worship. The Litany is one of the most effective ways to reveal our needs and to ask for God's help.

The words of the Litany should "give wings to the earnest common prayers of the people." Cranmer translated, arranged, and composed this first service in English, based on the ardent devotions of the primitive Church, making it comprehensive enough to cover the whole range of human need. Through Cranmer's skill, the incisiveness and vivid appeal of ancient phrases come down enriched and enhanced, but blunted of none of their poignancy and potency.

The petitions of the Great Litany are used by many worshipers, but do they remember any "wings" on those "earnest common prayers" as they pray them, and do the cries of "have mercy upon us," "deliver us," "hear us" come from uplifted hearts? The great words of petition and intercession are often empty of meaning. There is no appropriating of the prayers by the worshipers and there is no heart in the responses, for men are not involved in them. Possibly this is because they are too general, or too extensive, or too familiar, or the very sound of them is too archaic for modern ears.

Even though the wide sweep of the Litany covers the whole range of human need and is really quite up-to-date, the quaint phrases often fail to touch men personally. Perhaps that is why the monks spent so many hours illuminating their manuscripts of the Litany so at least there would be something to look at to relieve the crashing boredom of its frequent use.² At least men are spared now from such ridiculous sounding phrases found in an earlier litany as "from ghosties and ghoulies and long-legged beasties and things that go bump in the night, Good Lord deliver us,"³ although if one were to stay at an inn on Holy Island this phrase would be remembered in the creaking noises of the night, as the wind shakes doors and windows seeking entry.

Often during the reading of the Litany in a service of worship, the alternating solo and chorus drones on and some worshipers think again how seemingly pointless this endless repetition of words can be and how little of the love and truth of God are revealed in them. Nothing is so dreary as a long litany on a wet day. But at the very instant when such thoughts begin to distract and the wings of inattention threaten to waft us away, our minds are alerted to the meaning of some petition sounding loudly in our ears and our consciences are pricked by such words as the following, which is a common occurrence on Holy Island where fasting and prayer sharpen awareness and receptiveness:

That it may please thee to give to all thy people increase of grace to hear meekly thy Word, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.⁴

At such points one really prays the proper response, "We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord." Taken one by one, these marvelous little summaries of human need cease to be liturgical only and become devotional and are specific and timely enough to needle us to the quick, provided we are conscious of their

meaning and grab them for a longer look as they move across our minds.

The Litany need not be automatic and dull routine, discipline indeed and a mere duty to perform, but it can be a relevant word to one's present, ongoing life, a moment of true insight on one's knees.

The birds which haunt The Farnes have taken possession of every pinnacle and exposed rock. Visitors often find hundreds of these birds wheeling and slipping, zooming and dipping to within an inch or two of their heads. They swarm overhead and punctuate the hours of devotion like some litany of motion. The phrases of the Litany often come alive, seemingly aimed straight at us like the Holy Island birds diving from the circling heights straight for one's head.

Such petitions as "give to all thy people increase of grace" have brought fresh and strong the knowledge that all words in worship are drone and weary repetition until men become involved in them, until the sound of them comes as a message from God to men direct, and until men offer their own heart's desire along with the words of the spokesman. When men hear God speak through these words and are moved by them, worship comes alive in a definite response to them and men are ready to be involved because of their love for Him.

"Involvement" is a word full of meaning on Holy Island and means for men to enter fully into what they pray for.

Dear God, we desire to know what to do this day under the remembrance of yesterday's trials and the knowledge of today's temptations. We surrender our worried way to Thee and ask for faith enough to know and strength enough to do Thy will. Keep us close to Thee until we are ready to go forth. Amen.

II TUESDAY

The Point of It All

Trying to encompass all the Litany each time it is said is like trying to use all the recipes in the cookbook each time a cake is baked, or like trying to store up enough spiritual power during one trip to Holy Island in Lent to last a whole year. But letting a phrase or two catch and hold us can spur us to action in areas of faith and love, can be God's spoken word for each one to hear and heed, according to his need. Take that portion which has come alive for many and which we are considering: the prayer for an increase of divine grace to hear, receive, and act upon God's Word.

In order to hear and receive God's Word "with pure affection," men's love for Him must be uppermost. Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him . . . and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me."⁵ And again Jesus said, "He that is of God heareth God's words."⁶

Men are called on to expose themselves to the Word of God, as St. Cuthbert did when he let the icy salt water swirl over him as he prayed. As men come to worship in God's House they expose themselves to the Word of God, hungry for the truth of God, eager to respond to His presence in whatever way He prompts—while standing and praising Him with thankful hearts in song; while sitting quietly waiting for His Word to pierce their hearts and penetrate and lodge in their minds; or while kneeling humbly to ask His forgiveness and His mercy.

There is nothing quite so useless as a pencil without a point. Every home should have a pencil sharpener, for children and adults alike are always breaking the points on pencils and discarding them. There are piles of pointless pencils in most homes put away in some drawer or box, forgotten and lost. A pencil sharpener could put them back into operation. In order to get down to a new exposure of the graphite core or center, the wood must be shaved off, and this process must be repeated at intervals throughout the life of the pencil.

Any time apart on Holy Island acts on men's faith and love very much like the sharpener on the pencil, the Word of God giving point to both. The disciplines of obedience to God's Word shave off the wood which wraps up men's love and faith, exposing them both to view again, ready to begin writing with sharpened points a new page in the story of their lives. When men are close enough and attentive enough to hear His words, they begin to be shaved down to the action edge.

God's words can rub around most men for a long time like the blades of a pencil sharpener, before anything happens and a sharp point is produced, not because their cutting edge has dulled but because men are not shoved into the midst of them far enough for close contact. God's words can shave off the outer parts and reveal what is underneath only when men are held close to the sharpness of them.

Prayer and worship, even the words of the Litany, lure people to go all the way in yielding to the love and truth revealed in God's words, until at last they are touched and changed by the presence of God, restored to usefulness, like old pencils made new. No wonder we call such islands of experience, holy.

That phrase in the Litany already considered may have caught and pushed some minds all the way into the pencil

sharpener, and God's Word may have come as judgment upon their attitudes and the petitions may have become for each person a prayer for the increase of grace *for me* to hear meekly God's Word, *for me* to receive it with pure affection, and *for me* to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. When anyone can claim this prayer is *for me*, it is God's call to one individual to share in the drama of salvation, for at that moment he is alone with God on Holy Island, knowing no other, and the cry "have mercy" is a response to His divine love received the moment he is opened to it.

Only as we "*hear meekly*" God's Word, and *receive* it with "pure affection," utterly given over to it, and hold to what we know of Him which has come through the Word, with love, can we prevent His words from passing us by and leaving us as empty, graceless vessels to be overcome by evil in one way or another.

*O God, help us to see as far as we can and then trust
Thee with all beyond sight; kneeling we ask to know
Thy will and way, and wait for Thy strength to do and
to follow; so may we live our best for Thee from dawn
to dawn. Amen.*

II WEDNESDAY

Two Gathering-Up Points

The analogy of the pencil sharpener stirs up the whole question of redemption from ugliness and uselessness and pointless lives. Is not salvation from human sin, through repentance and soul surgery, a painful and continuing process? God's

redemption is the daily renewing of men's worn-down points, making sharp and useful the potential always present—as the sharpener reveals the graphite in the pencil.

Often one runs into those who have been disillusioned by some experience and have turned hard or bitter or cynical. They are suspicious of everyone and are always thinking or asking, "What's his angle?" "What's in it for him?" crediting no one with a generous or unselfish motive. For the understanding and growing Christian there is always a triangle, not an angle: a desire for completion—the self fulfilled in God and others—with all three angles of the triangle opening on the Center from which the love and faith of God operate.

For the Christian, human relations are not like the disconnected dots at the end of a line, indicating there is no more to come, or that something has been left out, but they are like base angles at the bottom of a triangle representing man and his brother, with God at the top. The founding fathers of our country knew about such a triangle and placed it at the center of human contacts. The pyramid of the Great Seal on a dollar bill has the eye of God at the top. Men carry it around in their pockets, when they can. They should also consciously carry it around in their minds, hearts, and relationships—each man and his brother, with God over all.

There is nothing quite so useless as a hidden faith, without vision or staying power, is there? There is nothing quite so pointless as love which never moves beyond the circle of self-concern, is there? There is nothing quite so pitiful as a potential son of God not revealing the image of God which is in every man, is there? So Holy Island beckons all men to come apart and deal with these matters without delay.

Be not, therefore, insensitive to the great words of the Litany, for they, too, are of God and stand ready to reveal to

men some portion of His love and truth and the way to appropriate both in whatever phrase of it strikes home. If men take Jesus' word for it, that God accepts men and loves them just as they are once they have come to their senses and have cried, "Lord, have mercy upon us," then men are enabled to accept themselves without running away, without always holding the cynic's mask over their faces; and they can even love themselves in a constructive way and begin to amend their lives according to His Word.

Close and continuing contact with the living God in worship, fasting, and prayer relaxes the tension and anxieties, sloughs off pride and the attitude of self-sufficiency, breaks the power of sin, and saves man from himself. For God helps each man face himself as he really is and furthers the innate desire within to move from there. This is the beginning of man's redemption.

There are two gathering-up points to take away from Holy Island: (1) continue to face oneself in the presence of God; (2) strive to come as close to Him as the pencil to the sharpener, and ever ask for the point to be revealed, made ready for use, however painful or oft-repeated the process.

Never forget that to really pray any part of the Litany with understanding and benefit to oneself and others requires men to stay with it until the point is made, following the example of the saints who lived on Holy Island and whose dominant characteristic was humility.

O Father of mercy, in the grip of darkness of sin we turn to Thee in sorrow, with an earnest desire for a forgiven and cleansed life; make us whole again; help us to find solid ground in our mire of helplessness and disobedience, and make us worthy to follow the trail Thy Son blazed from earth to Thee. Amen.

II THURSDAY

On Looking Within

The Longstone Islet Light is a beacon tower which shines in the darkness on the treacherous point. Its great foghorn sounds as the fog rolls in and has saved many a vessel from "The Farnes' fangs." This massive column of red stone towering above a rock base has been called Grace Darling's lighthouse ever since one wild September night in 1838 when the frail daughter of its first keeper made an heroic rescue.

There is nothing more treacherous than shoals hiding underneath innocent-looking water, especially when fog blinds one's eyes. Inevitably when one crosses to Holy Island to be alone with God, the light flashes and the foghorn sounds, warning men to look beneath the surface of self to confront the dangerous places hidden there. This is self-examination, or taking a long look within.

When John the Englishman and Jean the Frenchman first met in a crowded railway station, in Daphne du Maurier's novel *The Scapegoat*, here is what happens as John tells the story: "Someone jolted my elbow as I drank, . . . and as I moved to give him space he turned and stared at me, and I at him, and I realized with a strange sense of shock and fear and nausea all combined, that his face and voice were known to me too well. I was looking at myself."⁷

Most men feel a little like John as they catch an accurate glimpse of their counterpart, Jean, and are filled with "a sense of shock and fear and nausea all combined" at what they see.

It is not often men ever get such an honest and startling reflection of themselves.

However, Lent may be used as a mirror in which a man may peer as he makes a sober reappraisal of the self he sees, not selfishly or morbidly as the center and despair of existence, but in relation to other men and to the whole wide world which surrounds and influences life.

Man's face is a baffling mask when he first looks at it. Behind the face lies the mind, which is a "junkshop and a confused utopia," especially when a man tries to discern and catalogue his most cherished habits and beliefs as he looks within. But any self-study pursued with courage and patience, without dodging the truth, will bring some order out of this welter of confusion, if a man "turns a stream of fresh and full thought upon his stock notions and habits" and penetrates the mask which for so long has hidden his real self.

Most men are blind to their true selves. They are like the blind man in St. Luke's Gospel⁸ sitting by the side of the Jericho road begging alms. Men sit in the darkness of their blindness begging alms, when they should be busy at whatever it takes to regain their sight.

Spiritually blind men need insight as well as outer sight before they are able to stand upright again and move along without stumbling. The bump into a "double" in a railway station is most unlikely, although if men wish they can see themselves as they really are any time they care to look.

Note St. Luke's story of the blind man. No one knows how long this man had been taking his place by the Jericho road entreating men for alms. It is known, however, that one day, when the blind man's entreaties reached Jesus' ears, He stopped and asked him, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" And the blind man (whom St. Mark called Bartimaeus) replied

eagerly with hope rising in his heart, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." And Jesus said unto him, "Thy faith hath saved thee." And immediately Bartimaeus received his sight and was blind no longer. He arose and followed Jesus, glorifying God. Imagine, if you can, the miracle of restored sight and the joy of a man, blind for so long, now seeing again, in visual contact with life.

The conclusion reached from St. Luke's treatment of the story is that Bartimaeus really wanted to receive his sight back, in spite of the fearful changes this would mean in his life, all of which he probably did not foresee. No longer would he have the "security" of blindness, living off the work and sympathy of others. Now he would have to earn his place in society and take responsibilities, with no excuse for his failures to measure up. But his desire and his faith in Christ were real, and because of this the miracle took place. What happened beyond the moment is not known, but would it not be hard ever to lose sight of such a miraculous change in one's life?

O God, guide us aright and lead us toward inner peace and rest; and be in our hearts and minds to enlarge them and keep them ever-growing; and, O God, as we go into the day's life, guide us and help us to walk unafraid until tomorrow comes. Amen.

II FRIDAY

Inner Blindness

Men often fail to see that blindness goes deeper than the clouded eyes which surgery can often cure, although physical

blindness quickly wins their sympathy. It is the blindness all around and within which escapes our notice.⁹

Certain questions for any self-study emerge as the story of Blind Bartimaeus is pondered and applied to moral, mental, and spiritual blindness. Since St. Luke had been healed of inner blindness by Christ acting through the Apostle Paul, it must be assumed that the answers to these questions were implicit in his version of the blind man healed by Jesus on the Jericho road. Does not sight require a man to walk away from his beggar's mat into the discipleship of Christ, away from uncharitableness, away from racial prejudice, away from snobishness, away from the old life into a new life of brotherhood, as evidence of the changed condition of one who is blind no longer?

Most of us are afflicted with an inner blindness to truth, to human need, to our own uncharitableness and unlovingness, and to our own prejudices, a blindness which most of us do not want cured because in a peculiar way we actually enjoy it, for it gives us a way to rationalize our miserable and shabby conduct. Even if we are aware of our blind spots and recognize what is happening to our relationships because of them, we are sometimes afraid to face the light, for we really don't want to regain our sight. Perhaps even when men do see the need for more accurate insight and really want to be changed, they do not have sufficient faith in Christ to ask and mean, "Lord, that I may receive my sight, for I am ready to do whatever is necessary to see things whole again." All who fail to ask remain sitting by the Jericho road.

Inner blindness to one's real condition of habits, beliefs, and attitudes is a prevalent disease originating frequently in a man's fear of life as well as his fear of death, which causes him to close his eyes and shut out the world with all its perplexing

problems and responsibilities, thinking thereby to escape them, or that by doing nothing everything will be all right. But responsible Christians cannot neglect forever facing truth about themselves, feigning blindness.

During this Lent, then, open your eyes wide and take a look at yourself in the midst of the present world so that you may more fully express God's will for your life. All who take a look and see themselves as God sees them, must avoid any degeneration into morbid introspection and deeper withdrawal into the dark caverns of self. This Lenten stocktaking can result in a more Christian and healthy outlook and inlook, provided those who participate hold themselves to the unpleasant, but rewarding, task until they have been given a few honest glimpses of what restored sight can mean.

Blindness is revealed in many ways, but perhaps most clearly in men's cherished habits and attitudes so long unquestioned that they cannot evaluate them correctly. Men are often blind to all but what they want to see. A man was once disturbed when the incident of the whale swallowing Jonah was mentioned as having no bearing on the point of the story, namely, man's obedience to God's commands. He had always believed in the literal inerrancy of Scripture, but he had never read the Book of Jonah, nor heard it read, and when it was suggested that he read it, he refused. At the other extreme of blindness is the man in the Graham Greene play, *The Potting Shed*,¹⁰ who had a vested interest in atheism through his published works, and who refused to see any evidence of God's existence and power, even when the evidence was placed on his own doorstep.

When such areas of blindness are probed, whether in the area of beliefs or habits, attitudes or relationships, thoughts or feelings, motives or morals, men come up with conditions in themselves which need their patient and concerned attention

until sight is restored, by God's help. A serious self-study will uncover the blindness inherent in the vain and selfish woman, the ruthless businessman, the cruel and possessive "loving" mother, the blatant-mouthed masquerader who is really a shy person underneath; the congenital liar who is dreadfully insecure, the lieutenant who passes himself off as a major, the superman concept so widely evident which has wrecked many lives in every age, or whatever else men see as they look in the mirror at the reflection of their own true self. Most of these types can be seen in Terence Rattigan's sensitive play, *Separate Tables*,¹¹ which is really two plays. In them, the imagery of separate tables in a British hotel restaurant is used to depict human loneliness, isolation, and blindness, and the need for understanding and fellowship. The play shows what an honest facing of these several conditions of blindness can do to change them, as, one by one, most of the characters wake up to themselves and are well on their way to recovery of sight as the final curtain falls.

Dear Lord, open our hearts and minds to a new understanding of Thy word; give us courage and calmness and confidence for facing whatever lies ahead this day; and keep us in the straight and sure way of Thy peace, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

II SATURDAY

Windows Opening

In making a self-study some may find that many who call themselves Christians are blind to what being a Christian means. A Christian is one who believes that God cares and that through

the Incarnation (the coming of Christ) and the Atonement (the Sacrifice of Christ) He has shown that He cares supremely about all men, knowing them at their worst yet still caring for them and giving to them. Therefore, if men really see this they will respond with love toward Him who loves them so much and with love toward other human creatures whom He loves along with them. A Christian holding this belief can never subscribe to the shrug-of-the-shoulder philosophy or the couldn't-care-less attitude, but at all times will seek to know the truth and live by it.

When an honest appraisal is made at last—and this takes a lot of courage—budding signs of the beginning of things coming a bit more right can be seen. Men less quickly blame others for whatever happens to them. They more readily see and emphasize the good in others. They more humbly realize they do not know it all and are not perfect, or hopeless, and so begin to learn.

One of the great things Christ did for all men who are willing to look and see themselves is to remove their blindness and enable them to see outwardly and inwardly, as He did for Bartimaeus and for the man born blind whose words echo the certainty of all such miracles of healing: "Whereas I was blind, now I see."¹² The gods of this world have blinded men's minds and darkened their understanding and have alienated them from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them.¹³ A Lenten self-study will help to expose the potential of men's true and hidden selves, and will increase the possibility of releasing the great spiritual forces which have worked for man's good through the centuries of testing by trial, as exemplified by Christ and made manifest by His followers.

The most important question of all for Christians is this: Where does one stand as he looks and sees Jesus Christ, who is

both Man and God, beside his own reflection in the mirror? Is he like a blind man begging by a Jericho road or like a son of God raised up with eyes open, moving along with Him? Probably no one is ever completely in either category, but always somewhere in between, like Daphne du Maurier's John and Jean as each pondered his own peculiar circumstances and reacted to them. Begin wherever you are to pursue the shadowy figure of self which can lead to the point of recognition that all men are a part of His creation and vehicles of His grace. All men can be open to the beauty and wonder of life, partaking deeply of the meaning of love in relationship, finding new meaning in the command to love Him with all their minds. All men can find in the world, as terrible as it is, some of the goodness God has placed here for them to catch, to hold, and to fulfil.

If men go along with the cured-blindness approach to life, the closing words of the Jericho blind man's story will become their goal: "Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God."¹⁴

Such a Lenten discipline means "windows opening" for men to see through, enabling them to sing a new song loud and long, as blindness, suddenly or gradually, gives way to sight. In this new understanding and comprehension, as men's minds are cleared, they are blind no longer to God's purpose for their lives.

O God, keep us from misleading thoughts and anxieties. Into whatever is best for Thee and us, there lead Thou us; give us understanding sympathy and a full measure of common sense that we may live this day more closely to Thy plan for us; and keep us humble and loving above all things. Amen.

Third Week of Lent

III SUNDAY

The Hidden Heart

SO FAR, the meaning of loving God with all one's *mind* has been concentrated on. Now the meaning of loving God with all one's *heart* must be dealt with, still looking within. Peter, or whoever wrote his epistle, speaks a phrase which describes this heart area of Lenten self-examination: "the hidden man of the heart."¹ Instead of saying "the hidden man of the heart" the verse could be divided to say either "the hidden man" or "the hidden . . . heart," for Peter is speaking of "the inner man" where both good and evil lie—often hidden from view, but there.

That is why whenever the faithful prepare for the service of Holy Communion they pray first of all for God to "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts,"² thereby acknowledging humbly that all hearts are open to Him, that He knows all human desires, and that from Him no secrets are hid. Take a look, then, at the hidden man of *your* heart.

To the skilled doctor and surgeon there are few secrets left in the human heart on the physiological side (except how it beats and what makes it tick, and God alone knows these), for they have stethoscoped, cardiographed, and opened up a great many of them.

But the secrets still hidden in that seat of man's feelings and emotions, which is called the heart, are legion. The secrets

locked tightly within the human heart would make an unforgettable saga of heroism, sacrifice, and patient suffering, or an equally unforgettable saga of human degradation and demonic possession, or most often a mixture of the two. Such sagas would stir the hardest human heart to praise on the one hand, or to revulsion on the other.

The clergy come across these secrets in pastoral visits, in the confessional, in conferences with people, and in reading secular and religious books, papers, and magazines. They find, almost daily, examples of the unsung heroes of the human heart and those whose hearts are corroded by evil, all of them showing that "as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he."³ That is why men pray "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts," knowing that the secrets of the heart are locked in the crevices of the brain.

The flow of the heart's blood to the brain makes it possible for men to think on these things and to keep their senses alert to perceive the worth of them. The heart, then, is a symbol of the inner man and holds the secrets of what he is and all the motivations for his conduct, good or bad. Therefore, everyone must know "the hidden man of the heart" before he can deal with it. The heart must be probed and its depths plumbed in order to find what is really there beneath the superficial appearances and the unheard thump of its beat. This week we will be doing this.

We beseech thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

III MONDAY

Delicate Probing

The heart can be probed in several ways. For example, the hidden man of the heart stands naked before the psychiatrist, through the process of psychoanalysis; and often this is an essential therapy. Again man's heart is stripped of all pretense in the presence of a priest, through confession; and this, too, is often required for the soul's health. Or, best of all, perhaps, for revealing the truth, is when a man comes to himself alone in the presence of God, opening his heart, baring its secrets, with no intermediary.

David E. Roberts began a sermon on "Christian Certainty" with these words: "Let us start, then, with man, no matter how much such a proposal may horrify some theologians." Paul Tillich, who is a well-known theologian, was not horrified at this statement, for he wrote the Introduction to *The Grandeur and Misery of Man*, in which this sermon is found. Dr. Tillich commented thus on this very phrase: "The way to certainty is not through argument but through the courage to look at ourselves and to see ourselves as we really are, or in other words, as we are in the eyes of the eternal which cannot be deceived by us."⁴

One of the most shocking crimes and trials of the twentieth century, containing fantastic deceptions hidden in the human heart, was the famous Loeb-Leopold case in Chicago in the brooding twenties, when two brilliant boys from respectable families committed a brutal murder simply for the excitement of it and to prove they were in the direct line of Nietzsche's

Superman. The story of the hidden "thoughts of the heart" which revealed the source of this weird *Compulsion*⁵ has recently been retold for all to read and ponder again.

Our attitudes and feelings, the thoughts of our hearts, play important roles, for they determine the course of our lives; and the man of the hidden heart, be he hero or heel, must reveal himself to himself and to others and be judged by God at last for what he really is.

A prayer petition dropped into an intercession box in a parish church read, "I ask God for a miracle." Men are constantly asking God for miracles without clearing the way for them to happen, without freeing their thoughts from the chains of self-deceit.

Men ask for things without thinking of the consequences or what must be revealed in order to obtain them. They try to brush off the past, for example, as a speck of soot, but it won't brush off, so they try to shrug it off. Stocktaking often reveals a sad state, with the inside of the heart and mind looking like a long-neglected Sixth Avenue store window in New York City, with all the merchandise laden with dirt.

This intimate look at self in the presence of Christ brings to mind Kierkegaard's famous description of what Lent should do to men. He said Lent should "strip men of their disguises, compel them to see evasions for what they are, label blind alleys, cut off men's retreats, tear down the niggardly roofs they continue to build over their precious sun dials, isolate men from the crowd, enforce self-examination; and bring them solitary and alone before the Eternal."⁶

It is at one of these points that something usually happens to men and they turn to God, for cleansing first, then for re-filling both mind and heart with a better grade of content.

It is most important that men feed the head and the heart with nourishing food. Remember how the seed, which is the Word of God, falls on good ground, lands in an honest heart, and grows, bringing forth abundant fruit with patience?⁷ That is, when it is heard, kept, and acted on, when men's minds and hearts take it in. What "seed" is being sown to grow within your heart and mind? You had better look and see.

Take a more critical look, for example, at what you read, for your mind, heart, and life will be influenced by it. It is not a question of censorship ("Thou shalt not read such and such a book"), but of discrimination ("Thou shalt choose the better book"). Book covers and best-seller ratings should not attract or influence anyone unduly. Having seen and known the worst about life (and few have escaped this) why should men wallow in it as modern literature bids them do? "Brethren, the time is short."⁸ I bid you earnestly redeem it by what you read.

Dear Father, keep our minds free from involvement in the quirks and distortions of thought and in the futility of doubt and regret; save the best and the worst of us for responding to Thy daily call of living life to the full; and please, dear God, keep a twinkle in our eyes. Amen.

III TUESDAY

The Inner Man

The Christian Gospel is exemplified in the story of the Prodigal Son, which is the story of "the hidden heart." Feed for a moment on the content of this classic story of "man's need and God's action,"⁹ which applies to all, involving the basic ideas of repentance, confession, and forgiveness. Even if one has

never left home, the problem is the same. It can be that men are eating husks in the pigpens of a city far from home, or that they are chewing the cud of jealousy or uncharitableness or envy while staying right where they are. It is quite possible to be "at home," but not really at home in the sense of dwelling within the Father's love. This applies to the Elder Brother even more, perhaps, than to the Prodigal Son.

The inner man is the problem. Once a man has had an open and honest look at himself, what can he do? Despair is the natural result. But God did not leave the highest of His creation to sink at last into such a morass. The Gospel, which Christians hold to be God's truth, is just this: that when a man comes to himself and has sense enough to go to his Father and ask His forgiveness (as the Prodigal Son did, and the Elder Brother did not¹⁰), he finds that he is accepted as he is and that God's love cleanses, heals, and restores. Cannot all sing and mean "just as I am . . . I come"?¹¹

The ability to look inward is a form of humility and the beginning of one's way back from whatever "far country" he is in. In Lent it is good to check the progress of the journey to see how close to home one is.

Lent is going fast. During the weeks that remain each one must work hard to complete the picture of himself. No better time will ever come than this season which is ready made for *The Outsider*,¹² the one who is blind to his real self and who often lives in a world without values, to come to himself. There is sufficient time to seek to become "An Insider" with spiritual sight restored, one who feels wanted and who fits, for the first time, perhaps, into a normal framework of life, with at least some evidences of maturity and magnanimity, relatedness, and consciousness of the needs of others. Seize now your opportunity to discover "the hidden man of the heart" who is within you.

O God, help us this day, to keep calm in spite of stress, remembering that fret can spoil the day and that stewing over "fate" is foreign to Thy will for us; keep us close to Thy way of loving concern in all our relationships, and never let us fail to seek the best way and to avoid every lesser way, and to live our life to the utmost for the sake of Thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

III WEDNESDAY

Repent Ye

A visit to Holy Island calls for certain disciplines, four of which have already been mentioned—fasting, prayer, worship, and self-examination. But penitence is another important discipline necessary for the health of one's inner life. Penitence means simply being sorry for one's sins. Repentance is a stronger word and means an awareness of one's shortcomings leading to a changed heart and amendment of life. When one is stung painfully enough by conscience over one's sinfulness, penance of some kind is performed to show the depths of sorrow and repentance, eventuating in reconciliation with the person or persons sinned against, and restoration to the full life of the Christian fellowship.

This does not refer, however, to the severe penance and extreme self-mortification of a St. Cuthbert, who lived as a hermit on one of the lonely Farnes, but points to the path of penitence Joel urged on those who had strayed from God's way and were firmly held in the grip of heathen worship. "Turn ye even to me, saith the Lord . . . and rend your heart, and not your garments."¹³

Just as Joel called the people back from their ways to God's

way and pleaded with them to slip out from under the heathen yoke, so did those saints on Holy Island alternate between monkish apartness and missionary zeal, sallying forth from their island cloister to convert the northern parts of Britain. Just as Jesus admonished the first disciples to proclaim "repentance and remission of sins,"¹⁴ so did the saints who peopled Holy Island preach in His name. Just as John Baptist preached in the wilderness, and Jesus began His ministry with the message of "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,"¹⁵ so the saints obeyed the command "repent ye, and believe the gospel,"¹⁶ which were the first and last words Jesus gave to His disciples on earth.

Of course the word "disciple" comes from the same root as discipline. A disciple is a pupil, a willing learner. Therefore, for the Christian disciple, discipline means guidance under Christ as Teacher, who helps us to follow behavior more commensurate with the Christian faith.

The discipline of penitence involves consciousness of sin and sorrow for it, restitution as far as possible, and seeking God's forgiveness while at the same time forgiving oneself and others. The best good news of the Gospel is the promise of a gracious welcome to all penitent sinners from a merciful God.

Any visit to Holy Island, then, calls the pilgrim to fit the key of repentance to the lock of his own heart and open it up to God. This penitence means a personal response to the inner awareness of one's need, leading to some definite penance as an outward manifestation of sorrow and evidence of the sincerity of one's response to His call, "Repent ye."

Lent, as a Holy Island, is reminiscent of Christ's forty days in the wilderness fighting against earthly temptations. As a start in becoming *penitent* sinners, review for a moment His

several temptations and check them against your yieldings to temptations. He was tempted by the Devil to attract attention by a few spectacular miracles, such as turning stone to bread, making a giant leap defying gravity, and becoming a world conqueror and dictator. He was tempted by the hope of realizing the Kingdom of God on earth without delay. He refused to yield, for in each case what the Devil urged was contrary to God's will. Man does not live by bread alone. Man must take God on faith. Man must worship only God. Immediately after the temptations in the wilderness, Jesus began to preach, calling on the people for a change of heart. After His experience of fasting in the wilderness, the Devil let Him be, and He was hungry. God came and ministered to His wants.¹⁷

The disciplines on Holy Island whet our appetites for that which feeds our souls, leading us to take on a new diet for our newly cleansed spiritual life.

Come swiftly, O Lord, to the dark moments when we are lost. Make us aware of Thy presence. Strengthen us to resist the urges and pulls to deeper darkness. Stir us to move away from the dark moments of sinfulness toward the light of Thy forgiveness. Come quickly, O Lord, as we call—or forget to call—and keep Thou close to us and keep us close to Thee this day and night and as far as the days and nights stretch before us, through Christ. Amen.

III THURSDAY

Mortification

Ashes on the first day of Lent may have been heaped upon one's soul figuratively to acknowledge outwardly and visibly the need for repentance. But only in this sense should Christians

be sad and mourn. The Christian life begins with repentance, "We have erred, and strayed . . . like lost sheep,"¹⁸ but goes on to alleluia, forgiveness, and belonging. It is worth wading through the shallows of misery in order to enter into the deeps of lasting joy. By God's help the interior life approaches repentance in the spirit of conquering, of making a victorious onslaught against any down-sittings, backslidings, or acceptances of defeat.

Probably the hardest lesson for modern man to learn is that there must be repentance, a turning away from the old life, before a new way of life can begin. When the old life is purged away, through confession and surrender to God's will as completely as possible, newness of life begins to emerge. The absolution speaks of "all those who with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him."¹⁹ Repentance, then, enables us to be emptied of all blocks, frustrations, and sins, so that something better can be poured in. For there must be riddance of bad or very little good can be added to the already filled-up receptacle of self. What we push out as not wanted must be replaced by something we want which ministers to our soul's health.

Antique experts have long since developed eyes to see and recognize fine furniture hidden under several layers of thick paint. By patience and hard work they remove the paint and restore the piece. The scars and wear of the years are revealed, but the original stands as it was first made, and once again fills its intended place.

Penitence is the paint remover and Holy Island is the place and time for applying it, allowing it to do its work, then scraping off the softened layers of sinful pride, selfish living, over-indulgence, and "phony" fronts, which have obscured the real self. Man was made to live by the power of God and, while the

original sin of selfishness obtrudes and the choice between darkness and light is always before him, man is restless and unsatisfied until he finds restoration and oneness with the God who made him, until Christ is actually alive and made manifest in him.

The Christian religion is clear in its demands for penitence. Having done with life on the shallow level of selfishness, the penitent sinner gives forth at last with certainty the cry which has been stifled all along, "O Lord, *my* God."

The word "mortification" often conveys the impression of practising such extreme physical disciplines as flagellations, wearing hair shirts, and keeping lengthy vigils, as if it were connected with a "dark night of the soul" experience; it is also thought to be something reserved for saints who seem to enjoy and benefit from such things. But the meaning is far simpler and much more satisfying. Mortification means transformation, that is, growth, change, development, dying to sin and rising to new life. Paul uses the term "transformed" in at least two places: "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind";²⁰ "Transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ."²¹

The Christian goes ahead on the basic assumption that sinful human nature can be changed. The seed or bulb planted or buried in the earth brings forth new life and it is transformed by dying and becomes a new creation. But the life is really not new at all, for the new life is showing forth that which was potentially present all the time. Something similar happens when one dies to self-centeredness and rises to a new concern for persons and things beyond self. This is all part of the total transformation, the dying to self-centered babyhood and rising to an other-centered and mature adulthood.

Curbing self is part of the discipline of mortification. When men grow in Christ they come under the yoke of Christ and

He begins to tell them what to do. Self is no longer dictator. Christ leads men and they follow Him. He transforms the common round, the trivial task. He makes every morning new. He works through the efforts men make to follow His prompting. He enables men to accept their little crosses patiently and generously by the power and grace of His Holy Spirit.

Repentance is the step all must take if life is to be lived on a different basis and if they are to demonstrate by the new way they live—unselfishly, by love—that penitence (which partakes of the nature of a sacrament) has become a part of their daily life.

Radiance shines through most of the characters in the New Testament and those who made Lindisfarne “holy,” for their practice of the discipline of penitence was positive, not negative. There is no morbidity recorded of true saints. They possess an imperishable sense of humor which is God-given. They have the immense capacity to stand apart objectively and to laugh at themselves. No wonder monks are so often depicted as rotund and jolly. There is no “cheap melancholy” here but an intense love of life and whatever ministers to its growth.

Dear Lord and Father of us all, we thank Thee for all the days of our years which have been lived and are yet to be lived. Help us to be worthy of all Thy blessings. Keep us on the alert for opportunities to show forth Thy love so that our tongues may be guarded from speaking hurtful words and our faces from looks which may be misunderstood. May we rejoice in the life given this day and live it according to Thy will; in Christ's name. Amen.

III FRIDAY

Peter's Penitence

An illustration of repentance is the story of Peter's sin and Peter's penitence.²² Peter's sin of the denial of Christ is common to all and need not be dwelt on. But the great lesson of Peter's penitence also concerns all, and his final act of return is full of the deepest spiritual meaning, beyond a cock crow and a stinging moment of betrayal.

Peter heard, in the midst of being afraid and ashamed to own Christ, the accusing query, "Peter, where [who] is your God?" It was only when penitence drove him to his knees that he could cry again, "O Lord, my God."

Peter's experience is like walking down a long road through desert land, away from the mountains, the heights, the greenness, toward barrenness and darkness. Then, as the dullness, dustiness, and strain slow the walker's movements, he begins to wonder about the terrain and the destination and suddenly realizes he is off course.

When this moment comes to any man he is ready for a sudden tap on the shoulder from behind, or a voice calling his name; and when the tap is felt or the voice is heard, he stops, turns, and sees for the first time what he has been walking away from.

Most any man, when he realizes he is wandering aimlessly on his own, lost, turns around and begins walking away from the desert land and its lifeless plain, back toward the mountains; and the psalmist's cry becomes his cry, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."²³

Holy Island is a time and a place for penitence as well as for fasting, prayer, worship, and self-appraisal; it is a period of traveling back toward oneness with the God whom unrepentant men often fail.

Judas went out and in his loneliness and despair hanged himself, for he had never really *heard* his Master's teachings on forgiveness. Peter went out, repented in deep sorrow, and found his way back to God by accepting His forgiveness, because God had accepted his penitence. There was no time lag, no procrastination to slow his penitence. Peter allowed no time for his sin and guilt feelings to grow, once he discovered them, but did what he knew had to be done without delay. And for Peter the chains were broken; for him the time of alleluia had come. Men often put off repenting, hoping a less costly way can be found. *But there is no easier way.*

Joel knew that confession, forgiveness, and restoration were Christ's answers to that denial. The purpose of any visit to Holy Island is to bring about repentance, whereby men forsake sin. When that moment of turning comes, when that prickle of realization on the back of one's neck is felt, God is near; when defeat and frustration break down pride, when men come to any moment and know their strength is not sufficient, when men, as they must at last, come to themselves in the presence of God, then they dare not delay the journey from the wastelands of their own way, back to the triumphant life which is God's way.

Good Lord, keep the devastation in the world from devastating our hearts. Keep the cruelty of man to man from warping our minds. By Thy grace prevent us from allowing bitterness to destroy our souls, resentment to shut up our compassion, and suffering to

shatter our faith. Keep us, Good Lord, from living in the irreparable past by yielding it to Thee, and let us live only in the forgiven and forgiving present, with hearts full of thanks and with minds full of hope and trust based on the blessed knowledge that nothing can separate us from Thee to whom the future ultimately belongs. Amen.

III SATURDAY

Words and the Word

The Lindisfarne Gospels were written and illuminated by two bishops about A.D. 724. Tradition says the manuscript was washed overboard in a storm, while Bishop Eardulf was taking it to Ireland for safekeeping before a Danish invasion in 875, and that it floated back to safety at low tide and was recovered without injury. The Gospels have been reproduced recently by a Swiss firm. This costly and limited edition has turned out to be surprisingly in demand, with its color photographs of the original manuscript which has resided in the British Museum since 1753.

The book which Eadfrith wrote, which Ethilwald impressed on the outside and carved "as well as he knew how to do," which Billfrith, the Anchorite, adorned, and which Aldred, "unworthy and most miserable priest," glossed for God and St. Cuthbert, seems to have received, in addition, an interesting embellishment of scholarship.²⁴

The manuscript is composed of 258 leaves of stout vellum, each page $13\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$ inches, in a remarkable state of preservation. The manuscript contains the four Gospels, St. Jerome's epistle to Damascus, and the Eusebian Canon, all in Latin. At

the end is a note in English giving the traditional origin; and there is an interlinear English word-for-word translation. The illuminations were copies from Byzantine and South Italian originals, and the pages were decorated with interlaced creatures and strap-work (a narrow fillet or band folded, crossed, and sometimes interlaced) in magnificent Northumbrian style.²⁵

The monks on Holy Island preserved the precious Word by copying painfully with scratchy quills the life- and light-giving words. The light which shone from the Book penetrated the darkness and guided their way through ignorance, danger, temptation, and trial.

Holy Island stands for the great theme of the Bible as found in St. John's Gospel: "The light is still shining in the darkness, for the darkness has never put it out."²⁶

The Word and the Sacraments are the stabilizing elements on Holy Island. They must be used together as the two stimuli for living the devotional life. Men must keep in touch with the fountain and source—God's Word in His Book—and it must sustain and direct them in their post-Holy-Island life. The word of God is a lamp unto men's feet.²⁷

Halford E. Luccock tells this story of his youth. Hal and a few of his rebellious young friends decided to do the most wicked thing they could think of—burn the Bible. They took the huge book from his father's library and consigned it to the flames—a singularly common occurrence in the history of religion. The senior Luccock arrived on the scene unexpectedly and immediately spoiled their fun by pointing out that the huge book was not the Bible at all but the dictionary, containing the same words, of course, but in a slightly different arrangement—and that they could not destroy words by burning, only by not using them.

The young Luccock, as he grew up and became a distinguished professor at Yale University and very familiar with the Bible, would agree that burning the Book is not so wicked as ignoring it and that one can never be quite rid of it either by burning or by ignoring.

The Bible is not for burning but for learning, for it is the promised way out of darkness, and if its words are to have special significance for those who sit in darkness they cannot burn it or ignore it, but must examine it with care. Gather around the Book, then, and explore God's Word.

Save us from resentment this day, good Lord, and from that "poor me" feeling. As the day begins, lift us above the petty hurts which drag us down; lead us into the day's life forgiven and forgiving. Keep us conscious of Thy presence all day long, so that any tendencies which arise within to make us feel resentful and hurt, may be put to rout by thoughts of Thee. When the day ends, give us thankful hearts for all the blessings which have come our way, through Christ. Amen.

Fourth Week of Lent

IV SUNDAY—MID-LENT

New Treasures

THE BIBLE did not really belong to the people and become a part of their lives until the invention of the printing press brought wide distribution in the vernacular and the Reformation gave them freedom to read it. In Green's *Short History of the English People* is this testimony: "No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England in the latter part of the reign of the first Queen Elizabeth. England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible. Because of it, the whole moral tone of the nation was changed."¹

In the Elizabethan age the English language reached full flower; today most men hold to the King James version of the Bible as the finest expression of that age. But the great Reformation heritage is that each man can read the Scriptures in his own tongue and find out for himself what is there. Today it is possible to read the Bible in over a thousand tongues and in many excellent translations. In India this Reformation heritage is well guarded in the Service of Holy Communion in the Church of South India as the Bible is brought from the congregation at every service and presented to the officiating minister to read. The Bible belongs to the people who claim it. Today the Book is open for men to use as a guidebook on the Holy Island of Lent. Therefore, seek for the word which will be a "light unto our path."²

Since they have few lanterns or flashlights in India, the natives use a switch from the neem tree to light their pathway through the darkness. It burns slowly, like punk, and keeps a glow sufficiently bright to guide one's steps, provided the branch is waved back and forth gently to keep the glow burning. So those who read the Holy Scripture regularly find that it sheds enough light for each step they take.

Someone has truly said, "The world is not done with this Book, but the world is done for without it" and "The word of our God shall stand for ever."³ "I know this book is the word of God," said an old Mohave Indian chief, "because it pulls my heart."

It does pull one's heart as well as clear one's mind; for the ancient, yet timely, stories, characters, and passages hit home as hard today as they did "in the beginning,"⁴ when men wrote down the words under the white heat of inspiration and conviction which stirred their souls. Men still must live under the same basic law of God as did Moses, and suffer the same consequences of disobeying it; men still must reach beyond themselves to God for wisdom and strength to handle life adequately, as did the prophets; men still will go unsatisfied unless they find faith and hope to fill their fearful hearts like that found by the psalmists.

The Word of God does not depend on literal inerrancy as held by our forefathers, or on the modern dress of new translations demanded in our day, but on God's truth as it comes to every man who seeks it in the context of his own existence.

"The Bible is a strange book to the modern man, not mainly because of differences of language and symbol, but principally because it has a different view of man's nature and human destiny. It speaks of the Divine initiative, of grace, of man as re-

sponsive to God's word. The Christian Gospel in the New Testament speaks to a condition and a need of which we are only fitfully aware. It demands a detachment for which we have little time. It confronts us with a drama of human destiny in which our favorite character part does not appear."⁵

Open, then, the Book and seek greater familiarity with the "whole counsel of God."⁶ Even in its most primitive parts "it is the record of those great spirits of our race who have been discovered of God."⁷

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy grace may mercifully be relieved; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

IV MONDAY

Bible Stories and Characters

There are great stories which challenge us on almost every page of the Bible and which throw new light on how to live more nearly as God wants us to live, and these stories yield new treasures each time they are read. Take two samples, one from the Old Testament and one from the New—the Call of Jeremiah,⁸ and the Prodigal Son.⁹ Jeremiah discovered that God is a personal God, approachable and accessible to all who call upon Him. God removed the fear that kept Jeremiah from growing up, and implanted a keen moral sense in him and gave him spiritual insight that clarified judgment. Read this great story of Jeremiah's devotional life and learn how God kept close to this prophet all his days and made him strong. The

Lord said to Jeremiah, "Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth."¹⁰ The story of the Prodigal Son is found only in St. Luke's Gospel and it shows where man's rebellion and effort to escape from his Father must always end when he comes to himself. "And when he came to himself . . . he arose, and came to his father."¹¹

There are many stories with a meaning, needed by all men, which never grow old—Adam and Eve, teaching the inevitable consequences of disobedience and man's desire to get away from God, to be "as gods" and "know it all";¹² Jacob at Bethel,¹³ one man who discovered that God is in every place wherever we go; the Good Samaritan,¹⁴ when a man recognizes his neighbor in the person of everyman; Nicodemus coming to Christ by night¹⁵ to find the truth, for his conscience would not be stilled.

But the most important story of all is the story of the Incarnate Christ and the meaning of His existence as God's Son. So read and learn from the great stories of the Bible.¹⁶

There are great characters, too, who make the stories come to life, and stand on tiptoe above all the other persons in the Bible showing man's many-sided approach to God and ways of responding to Him in worship and acts. Take Moses,¹⁷ who led a nation to greatness, and Ananias,¹⁸ who helped complete one man's conversion: both answered God's call to go for Him.

When the lives of these men who were God's instruments in the world are read, we find that their greatness increased in direct ratio to their dependence upon and obedience to Him. In many instances the response to God's call was reluctant. Moses tried hard to escape responsibility, claiming he was no speaker. But once he accepted what God placed on him, his steadfast leadership gave freedom to God's people and laid the foundation for the laws of God for men who must dwell together.

Ananias is not often mentioned because he was associated in a minor way with a greater man, Paul. But he helped make Paul great by acting for God. Had Ananias not known the substance of the Christian faith¹⁹ and gone without hesitation to Paul on the street called Straight, as God directed, God could not have used Ananias so effectively. Ponder the implications of this story, especially the phrases "Arise, and go" and "receive thy sight."²⁰

Anyone can follow a plan of Bible reading with a little discipline during such a season as Lent, or one can open the Book almost at random and find God speaking through His words something significant for him to hear. There are great passages galore, but to open up new paths in the deep waters we must read, ponder, and apply with persistence and regularity; reading as hungry disciples, passionately concerned with what God is trying to tell us through the words, the people, and the incidents.

Some phrases from such reading will stick for later recall: "Thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in";²¹ "Intreat me not to leave thee";²² "I know that my redeemer liveth";²³ "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest";²⁴ "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts";²⁵ "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light";²⁶ "The kingdom of God is within you";²⁷ "Ye shall receive power";²⁸ "But the greatest of these is charity [love]."²⁹

The many great passages scattered from Genesis to Revelation, as well as stories and characters, endure, for they give men glimpses of the eternal.

Dear God, help us to find our way out of the past into Thy way of forgiveness and love. Help us to be honest and to make the direction of our days conform

*to what we know of Thee in Jesus Christ, our Lord,
in whose name we pray and in whose way we would
walk. Amen.*

IV TUESDAY

Making a Meditation

The prophetic authority from the authentic Word of God comes from living so close to Jesus Christ that His way becomes The Way for us.

Lesslie Newbigin, a bishop in the Church of South India, in his fine book, *The Reunion of the Church*, has this to say about "authority":

"Jesus produced no 'authority' (although He spoke with authority). The authority with which He met men, with which He taught, with which He cast out devils, was in Himself alone. It was the personal authority of Truth, for He is the Truth. It was the authority of God, the Creator of men, who has made men to recognize Himself. The truth of the Gospel cannot be possessed apart from personal faith in the living Christ."³⁰

That authority comes from an accurate and profound knowledge and understanding of the Bible and comes only by intimate study and meditation using the Bible as an instrument of private devotion.

A word about the art of making a meditation, which in the Christian sense means simply fixing one's mind on God and giving Him one's full attention, drawing near to God by thinking of Him. For it is only by looking at Jesus Christ that we are able to begin to understand what God is like. Did not Jesus say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"?³¹

If we want to be brought near to God and to find His presence a real and living thing, we must look at Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the four Gospels. Jesus is the Way, the Guide who leads men to the Father. The Gospels, therefore, surely give us a living picture of Him which leads us into God's presence.³²

Great Christian living grows out of knowledge and understanding of the Bible. Anyone who is a Christian will study God's Word, and as he studies and meditates he will find inspiration for witnessing to the truth that God has not left man in a helpless dilemma, but has provided a pass through the mountainous impasse of sin and ignorance. God's love was expended all the way to enable us to do this. God has acted to show all men His way and to save them from their own ways.

"Most of us have had the experience of visiting some great museum in which we have strolled around looking wonderingly at its vast store of varied and interesting treasures, and yet feeling rather lost, wishing that we had an expert guide who could explain to us what it all meant."³³

Commentaries and devotional manuals attempt to do just this. Following such orderly reading as suggested in Footnote 16 and giving time to ask and answer three questions concerning the passage read, will open up its meaning for immediate application. What does it mean? What does it mean for me? What must I do about it?

"The Bible is the only source of first-hand witness concerning the Person through whom God revealed the saving knowledge of Himself to the World, and it is in the pages of this Book that the personal encounter with the Person of Christ takes place."³⁴

Dear Lord, open our hearts and minds to a new understanding of Thy Word; give us courage and

calmness and confidence for facing whatever lies ahead this day; and keep us in the straight and sure way of Thy peace, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

IV WEDNESDAY

Read, Mark, and Learn

Since the Bishop of New York Book for 1956 dealt with the subject *How to Read the Bible*,³⁵ it would be repetitious to explore it again here. But a few simple admonishments and encouragements might be of help.

Read the Bible because you are a Christian; because you hunger and thirst for a life worth living; because you wish to solve the riddle of history; because in this Book God the Creator speaks to men His living Word and unfolds His purpose of salvation in Jesus Christ.³⁶

Live by the Bible, although there are many parts of the Bible one does not understand at first reading. But there are many parts of the Bible one *does* understand and which point the way for one to walk. These words become lighted lamps for men's feet.

Use the Lectionary placed in front of the Prayer Book to suggest content and continuity in Bible reading, and which goes hand in hand with prayer and the other disciplines of the devotional life.

Use the Prayer Book, since a large portion of the Book of Common Prayer is taken from the Bible and keeps all who use it close to the Word of God.

Try reading a modern translation. Several new translations of the New Testament are very good—Goodspeed, Moffatt, Knox, Rieu, the Revised Standard Version, and Phillips. *The*

Short Bible for the Old and New Testaments is particularly helpful, because it gives an introduction to each book.

Read devotional classics and other devotional books which appear each year and keep alive the devotional life.

Any person can retire to one of the hidden rocks and caves on Holy Island, like those holy men of Lindisfarne, for a quiet time with God's Holy Word and for stirring up the inner fire. Those who do so return with joy to the mainland ready to take up the opportunities for service and witness which come their way. Indeed one must use such a regular discipline before any rewarding understanding comes.

Every night the lamps are burning in front of the Church of the Ascension on Fifth Avenue in the city of New York, beckoning those who pass to stop, turn aside, enter, and pray. These twin gleams in the dark hold the promises of inner light which warms and dispels the cold mists of life. So God's Word gives light to those who walk in darkness. From the Word of God comes a powerful sense of His presence. From it men gain a glimpse of humility shaming their arrogance, a demonstration of industry highlighting their sloth, a note of courage piercing their cowardice, an awakening to some incident in their narrow-gauge living which is racing toward a collision with a situation which they cannot dodge or handle alone. God is ever near to us in Christ.

Lent tells men not that He is in a Book or in a promise, but that He is in a Life, and that in that Life is man's redemption, when that Life is accepted into man's life. Lent reminds of "the sobering aspects of judgment, sudden and irrevocable, the shutting of a door, the springing of a trap" when man chooses to ignore God. But Lent also tells men, in the parable of the fig tree in leaf, for example, that out of death can come life, out of distress can come redemption, and out of evil can come good.

"The Bible shows life in process, reaching on from that which is primitive and partial to that which shall be complete in Him; and the long procession of its human figures culminates in the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."³⁷

In the Book is God's truth for every age. Burn it if you will. Damn it if you must. But do not ignore it, for in it is the straight Word of God the Creator to restore and redeem your life and enrich it abundantly. You are the people of the Book which changes men and nations. Hear, then, and hearken unto it.

Dear Lord, make manifest through us this day some measure of Thy love. Help us to open blind eyes to the wonders of Thy life. Put us up against forces so strong we must constantly seek Thy strength. Use us as Thy messengers to those who have not listened to nor heard Thee. Put a trumpet in our hands with the will and the wind to blow it for Thee; in Christ's name. Amen.

IV THURSDAY

Resentment's Cure

For special services held on Holy Island during the year, the worshipers stream across at low tide when the water recedes for a few hours and the island becomes a part of the mainland. A line of twenty-foot poles marks the route through a crossing of the stream Lindis at "The Low," and this trail is called "The Pilgrim's Way." With the well-barnacled poles set at rakish angles on one side and the centuries-old cairns,* laid by the monks to guide the pilgrims of long ago from the mainland, on the other, the way is easily traversed in safety, afoot or by ve-

* Rock piles.

hicle. Just in case the quick-running tide rushes in too fast or a visitor does not start in time to make the crossing to or from, two refuge shelters stand on spindly legs to rescue them. "Theet's for seeving leef,"† as the natives describe them. To-day the fast-moving taxis skirt the Snook and hug the shore to escape the incoming tide as long as possible.

While very few lives have been lost, either in shifting quicksands or through lack of judgment and ignorance of the tides, only the clearly marked passage and the careful charting of the tides have prevented many from perishing.

Have you ever battered against a stone wall and found it literally breaking you to pieces, while at the same time you cannot make a single crack in the wall? There are many kinds of walls against which men hurl themselves in futility. Some they erect themselves and use as excuses for their attitudes or conduct. Some walls they cannot break down, for they define their own limitations. But there are a few walls which bring men up short to remind them of God's way of dealing with situations, and men see that His way is better than their own battering-ram technique.

In Isaiah are these words: "But thou shalt call [those] walls [thy] Salvation,"³⁸ for they yield to God's way as if by magic, and as men approach them under His guidance they disappear. After such an experience they can say with Paul, "and [He] hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us."³⁹

Take the wall of personal resentment which blocks off many from God and everyone else. This sense of being wronged by another and the erection of a wall which separates, isolates and brings a seething misery which eats at one's inner peace. Resentment always does the greatest harm to the one who carries the galling, poisonous burden of it.

† "That's for saving life."

God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. Christ is in all men reconciling them unto Himself and to each other. His reconciling Spirit is the opposite of self-centeredness. This wall of tangled evil and ill-will, by which men are separated, dissolves like the walls of an Indian mud hut in the monsoon floods, when the spirit of forgiveness replaces resentment. This is true no matter what the cause of it may be, even though one feels the person or word or incident or wrongdoing has spoiled his life forever. When we offend others, and they erect a wall of resentment against us and the world, there is only one Christian solution—forgiveness. Jesus gave His life to teach all men this great redemptive fact which He exemplified in all He taught and did. We deny Him as Lord when we fail to follow His lead and remain resentful and unforgiving, often without the other person ever knowing why.

No matter how wrong the other has been, no matter how much harm he has done, no matter whether he repents or not, when the offended one has forgiven him, the burden drops, the wall tumbles down, and the chances for the other's redemption have increased a thousandfold. Those who won't forgive, always waiting for the other to make the first move, cannot enter into the experience of being forgiven themselves. The Lord's Prayer makes this perfectly clear: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." This is the only condition in the entire prayer. Forgiveness is to enter into and "to share in the redeeming work of Christ."

Each time a Church service is attended, the worshiper is reminded of the barriers which will surely shatter him unless he allows God to reverse his walking or thinking or speaking. Any trip to Holy Island provides time and opportunity for breaking the deadlock of resentment and opening up the penitential, Christlike way of forgiveness.

Resentment is a common problem which spoils life and can

threaten its destruction, moving as quickly as the tides of the North Sea swirling in to isolate Holy Island. Deal with it swiftly.

O God, help us examine our motives and make us honestly face what we see. Let no unworthy intention remain, but clear our minds of selfishness. In our thoughts and in our desires keep our minds centered on Thee and Thy Will, and keep us humble. Amen.

IV FRIDAY

Breaking the Barrier

Only quite recently have men broken through the sound barrier by flying an airplane faster than sound. Until then it was thought that at the speed of sound there was a mysterious unbreakable wall which man could not crash through. The dramatic moment of breaking through the sound barrier came at last after stubborn, courageous, and tragic attempts, with the discovery that beyond the speed of sound the controls of the plane must be reversed to avoid disaster. When the controls are reversed, the sound barrier is no longer a cosmic wall against which man must forever dash himself to pieces. At the point of apparently inevitable destruction, the pilot reverses the controls and continues uninterruptedly on his flight pattern in safety.

A major concern of Christ's ministry was to show men that if they attempt to control their own lives, their own destiny, with self as their only concern, they shall dash into a stone wall which will never yield. But if they reverse the controls, turn to Him and let Him handle their lives and follow His way,

the middle wall of partition will be broken down. Any wall which brings men up short and makes them realize that their way is not His way can be their salvation.

An excellent example of resentment's cure came one day in a letter a rector received from one of his former parishioners. She had been serving her parish as a volunteer director of religious education for a long time. Through the years she had been studying, going to conferences, and really applying herself to learn more about that field. Recently she wrote and told her former rector she had applied for the job of Director of Religious Education in her present parish. The rector there gave her many reasons why he could not consider her for the position. He talked to her honestly and frankly, reminding her to watch out for her seeming need for the "limelight," her need for praise, and a few other personal traits which he felt were stumbling blocks to others. In the end, he refused her the job. At first she felt shattered because she really had a deep sense of commitment to her work and a desire to serve the Church in this capacity. She wrote her old rector the whole story. He realized that whatever he said must be encouraging, and yet must hold her up and stretch her. So he wrote a long reply immediately, but felt it wasn't adequate and didn't mail it for over a week. Then he re-read it, added some thoughts in longhand, and sent it off, praying it would help.

Then a second letter came from her containing what follows, which she is willing to share with you. Her letter is a case history of how one person, by God's help, dealt with resentment and how her middle wall of partition was broken down and became her salvation. Here is her letter:

Someone wrote that "by a sublime paradox the fruits of denial are infinitely sweeter than the fruits of desire"—and I've never agreed with that or appreciated the real meaning until lately

with the denial of that D.R.E.-ship. It now appalls me that I could possibly have wanted it so badly that I reacted in the manner I did—like a child not getting her way—fighting, biting and scratching, and running to you with the whole story. Certainly the Lord in His infinite wisdom let you cogitate what to write while the child did a bit of growing up—for your prayers (and mine) must have been answered as I “simmered” down and in the process acquired a bit of dignity I might have needed. Much as I would have put the Rector out of my mind, that one “corny” phrase of his stuck—“Let go, let God!” So I did, and it isn’t corny nor just a catch phrase, but humility itself. It was a bitter pill to swallow to return to church the following Sunday. I think I started to use the phrase then, and I prayed I wouldn’t let resentment get the best of me and that no church job could stand in the way of my faith, and it worked. I resolved that if I had to peel potatoes for a church dinner, or sew for those in need, that I’d do it to the glory of God. And oddly enough I caught a glimmer of peace I haven’t known before, of doing something nobody’s going to praise me for—of doing something anyone else could do, but with a special sort of feel about it. I hope you gather what I’m rambling on about. Somehow it just doesn’t matter much any more. The resentment, the hurt pride, slipped away as though it had never been there. I even attended a Church School faculty meeting last week (I had vowed to myself I wouldn’t) and was pleasant and normal and tried to apply that word empathy in which the Rector said I was so lacking.

I had thought, too, of taking a “sabbatical leave” but have been doing just what comes to hand—my library work, rehearsing the Cherub choir, and any other odd job. In the meantime some interesting developments have occurred. [She lists six wonderful results of all this, too personal to share.]

Thank you for your letter, I’m glad now that you didn’t mail it at once for I feel that I really have come a long way in a few weeks and maybe needed to get slapped down to stand more erectly. A lot of things the Rector said are true—we just hate hearing the truth about ourselves, I suppose. In his own way, though, he has as you said, courage and honesty to his credit, and has probably aided me spiritually whether I liked it or not.⁴⁰

The former rector still hears from this person and she still has her sense of joy over "resentment's cure," but she can never rest on her oars. The temptation to resent is always ready to strike when men relax and lay aside their weapons of prayer and humility.

Good Lord of our life, we need Thee, for we are not sure of the way we should go this day. Many ways call our feet, but only one of them can we walk. We do not mind hardship or danger or even suffering if there is a chance to serve Thee. We want to be useful. We want our life to count. So we come to Thee asking which way we must take for Thee today. Amen.

IV SATURDAY

Antipathy

The life-spoiling condition of antipathy is another version of resentment which must be mentioned as a variation on the same theme.

Antipathy is a form of antagonism of one human being toward another. Antipathy means incompatibility and is opposed to sympathy. It ranges in intensity from dislike to loathing. It can be caused by any number of things, but adds up to a broken relationship, something to be mended, or a wall of separation which must come down. Some people are naturally likeable and others are drawn to them. Some are instinctively disliked, many times for no real reason. The greatest labor of Christians must be for the disliked ones.

In that striking book, *The Nun's Story*, the discipline of relationship is ever to the fore in the "Living Rule of the Order."

Sister Luke, whose story it is, learned many hard lessons in how to get along with the other Sisters. One lesson which stood her in good stead was this: "For those whom we instinctively dislike, try to do something. Remember . . . the golden rule for antipathy is to ask to do a service for the one your spirit withdraws from."⁴¹

That is a good answer for this soul-harming feeling toward another. It is the second-mile approach and conforms to Jesus' words: ". . . for if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?"⁴²

It is true that some people just naturally rub us the wrong way, and it follows that there are those whom we affect in the same way. The Christian strives by God's help to correct within himself whatever is a stumbling block to another, and then to take the first step, and as many steps as may be necessary thereafter, to overcome this dangerous feeling of antagonism toward another. To let the condition remain untouched is to invite spiritual disaster. If a known state of antipathy exists, ask for direction as to what God wants you to do, and do it without delay "that ye may be the children of your Father."⁴³ When this "golden rule" is applied, the results are amazing—relationships are mended, walls are removed.

An old hymn adds a pertinent postscript of two lines to those who bear resentments and hold antipathies:

If our love were but more simple, We should take him at his word.⁴⁴

For the God who created all mankind sent His Son to show that love and forgiveness are better than hate and resentment.

But men are a stubborn lot, so often as "Christians" refusing to react as Christians, and thus preventing themselves from growing out of the milk-and-sugar stage of religion and becoming grown-up sons and daughters of the Father. "Many be called, but few chosen"⁴⁵—but the few who are helped to find a way to cure resentment and antipathy make the ministry of all believers a glorious task. One can see people growing spiritually, just as one can see children growing taller. And the wonderful thing is, there is no end to it—to children's height, yes, but not to one's spiritual stature. New insight and understanding wait for all who stand under God's judgment and who accept His illuminating love which breaks down the middle wall of partition between men. But there are those who refuse to grow, who get bogged down in the mire of resentment, refusing to learn that any present moment can be a time of change for them, so that even this wall can be their salvation.

Jesus is still asking men to reverse the controls, to yield to His control if they have not already done so. If men are aware of what they are and if resentment or antipathy is present as a wall against which they dash themselves in vain, may they, by His grace, forgive and be forgiven, so that the flight of their lives shall no longer be shattered at either barrier. It may be the most difficult thing they have ever done, but it is the only way to break through resentment and find inner peace and to open the way to reconciliation with God and man.

Isaiah gave a clue: "But thou shalt call [those] walls [thy] Salvation."⁴⁶ Paul gave a lead: "He hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us."⁴⁷ A modern analogy has given a technique: in order to break the sound barrier men must reverse the controls. And a needy person has pointed out a successful way—"Let go, let God."⁴⁸

The pilgrim to Holy Island must treat resentment like the

quicksands and the tides. He must take heed and give thought; he must let the Holy Spirit of forgiveness make resentment disappear, like one of The Farnes at high tide.

O God, restorer of the years man has destroyed, help us to build up and not tear down. Where a word is sharp on our tongues, withhold it. When an inner sarcasm finds outward expression on our countenance, wipe it off. Make us firm but gentle and so fill our lives with good relationships. Amen.

Passiontide Begins

V SUNDAY—PASSION SUNDAY

Reconciliation's Aftermath

ST. CUTHBERT, the best loved of Northumbria's early churchmen, is the one most often associated with Holy Island. This onetime shepherd boy spent many years as a humble hermit. Islanders still spin stories of his devout life: how he often prayed for hours while standing up to his neck in the cold sea water; how he continued long in acts of penance and self-mortification; how he retired frequently for meditation to the small island called now by his name; and how he loved the birds which flocked to the islands. St. Cuthbert's body, so the islanders tell, was moved from tomb to tomb, at last "to sleep no more within the sound of the choristers and the music of the sea." But through his life ran the songs of the Psalter which brought him joy.

The Psalter has sung its way into the hearts of Jews and Christians alike and the songs attributed to David have become the songs of the ages. Formal worship nearly always includes one or more psalms read or sung, and this is a custom long established, going back to the Temple worship in Jerusalem.

In church, while the Psalter is being read, one is often arrested by a verse which he wants to stop and think about. But the responsive reading rolls on relentlessly and usually the verse is forgotten unless one can remember to snatch a pencil

stub and note the psalm for the day so as to return and reflect on its meaning at leisure.

There is one verse, however, which always hits hard each time this particular psalm is read, and it is difficult to escape from its bald statement, so typical of the uninhibited writers of the psalms. "But I was sore troubled: I said in my haste, All men are liars."¹ Once while flying across the country I overheard a conversation which took place between a soldier and his seat companion about the break-up of the soldier's marriage. His story ended with this bitter judgment: "I will never trust another woman."

Hearing words of such embittered disillusionment with all people and all life because of an experience with one person and one life, brings to mind many similar experiences of greater or less degree, quite common among men; and this verse of a psalm could be descriptive of such a situation: "I said in my haste, All men are liars."

The author of this psalm speaks for that soldier and many others when he calls *all* men liars and cheats, because *some* of them have been false to him and have disappointed or failed him. But note how honest this unknown writer is as he makes an excuse for his wholesale condemnation: "But I was sore troubled," or perhaps he was just plain "sore." And note, also, how he learned his lesson and found the answer to his condition, which he described earlier in the psalm—when "the pains of hell gat hold upon me . . . then called I upon the Name of the Lord . . . I was in misery, and he helped me."²

Only God *can* help those who are in such plights, and the moment they believe this and act upon it they are able to swallow and keep down the ashes of bitterness. For it is when such a blow strikes that some lose faith in mankind and others lose faith in the Church and even in God—usually because their faith is so shaky and loosely held in the first place. In

this weakened, unbalanced, bewildered, stunned, or hurt condition, men often lash out at life and people, or they withdraw into a shell and refuse to try ever again another experience of living and working with other people, all because of just one moment and one person who failed them and God at the same time. And they never cease saying in haste, "all men are liars."

Speaking with such haste indicates men are too quickly hurt and that they much too quickly judge. Regardless of whether one is on the giving or receiving end of such hurts and judgment he finds his amazingly fertile mind can dig up excuses for his conduct, whatever it is, and give a reason, no matter how wrong, which eases his mind and conscience temporarily. The Church or Christians or "all men" *en masse* are never at fault, however. The cause of disillusionment really lies in individuals here and there who distort the truth and alter facts to suit themselves and their purposes and so produce the factors which make the unsolved problems of life.

What men need to remember at all times and to relate their thinking and acting to, is that *Christ* is Lord and Master, and not any one human being who happens to block off the truth, causing others to be "sore troubled" or just plain "sore." And note the warning in this psalm, that for one to *cause* even one moment of disillusionment in another is to break the baptismal vow "to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end."³

We beseech thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon thy people; that by thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR PASSION SUNDAY

V MONDAY

See Both Sides

One of the major tasks of Christian education is to teach parents, children, and individuals to face occasions of shock and disappointment which come repeatedly to all, with Christ's kind of magnanimity, forgiveness, and understanding, and to look at both sides of every situation—"my" side and the other side. Men must learn as early and quickly as possible that in this life they cannot always count on someone to smooth things over superficially with a chuck under the chin.

A few parents and children in one parish had a wonderful opportunity to practise this Christian teaching just before the children's big service of the year, the candlelight carol service on Christmas Eve. Several eager choristers who had been unable to attend the required weekday rehearsals for one reason or another, showed up and were vested. Just before the procession formed these few children were told they could not sing in the choir because of the attendance-at-rehearsal rule. Although this should have been done when the children first arrived, and although the parents and choristers should have been more familiar with the rule, nevertheless the situation developed as related.

This could have been a heartbreaking experience. Both parents and children could have met the situation by rebellion and hurt and unyielding hearts. But after the initial disappointment, the Christian way prevailed. There was no fixing of blame, but an earnest attempt to see *both* sides of the incident which arose because of misunderstandings on *both* sides. All of those children who were left out were in the choir the follow-

ing Easter Sunday, well rehearsed, singing mightily and joyfully, "Jesus Christ is risen today." They had learned the hard way.

Christian education in Church School and at home attempts to be redemptive; it therefore encourages and teaches children to see as objectively as possible both sides of every question and situation, as Christ taught, rather than to fix blame, to hold grudges, and to retard reconciliation. The Christian's job is to keep on growing in spiritual stature, and forgiveness is part of that growing, one answer to the prayer "forgive us as we forgive others."

Actually, in all such issues men are deeply involved in theology, in this case the Christian doctrine of man, which remains the only realistic way to explain man and his conduct. No one is sinless except Christ. Through Him men have their inner need for purity and forgiveness satisfied and they know the meaning of God's merciful kind of love. Only by His coming to men and continuing with them are they *able* to forgive such incidents as the disappointed choir members and the disillusioned husband. Only by His coming into men's hearts and staying there *can* they meet disappointment positively and let nothing remain to fester inside which blocks off God and others, which sours life, and which makes all concerned utterly miserable.

It should be obvious that the business of Christians, those at one with Christ's purpose for life, is not to nurse hurts and wrongs, but to *work* at the *ministry of reconciliation*.

Rethink, then, and reconsider whatever experience still rankles within you and causes distrust of the human race, because of one person who failed you and God, and whom you failed, too, because of your reaction. No one of us is perfect. That is why we need a Saviour.

In that stirring hymn, "The Son of God goes forth to war,"⁴ dedicated to the first Christian martyr, there is a line telling how St. Stephen followed his Master Jesus Christ and "prayed for them that did the wrong." Hard upon this line is the unanswered question, "Who follows in his train?"

*Help us to remember, O Lord, that this is the day
Thou hast made and that we can rejoice and be glad in
it; a day made for us to live fully, not waste; a day
given for us to use, not spoil; a day to walk through
and bring happiness to those we brush past. O Lord,
our God, help us to make the most of this day for
Thee. Amen.*

V TUESDAY

No Hasty Utterance

The unhappy psalmist who said in his haste, "all men are liars," had not Christ. Christian men today have Christ, and this makes all the difference. Take, therefore, each peculiar situation and be open to the healing, restoring ministry of His presence in that situation. God will wipe out the past, as we in sorrow confess it, through Jesus Christ, who is both Lord and Saviour and who comes to all hurt and disillusioned ones. He alone can bring true comfort and peace: not a flabby comfort; not an uneasy peace, which makes us weaker and still unsure; but the stretching, sustaining comfort and peace which keep men growing toward His size for them which is much bigger than they are at present.

Every service of worship in God's house ministers to those

who hug their bad experiences in human relations, refusing to be completely honest with themselves or to make any allowances whatever except for themselves. Yet all through each service runs the theme of remembrance of man's salvation in and through the crucified and risen Christ, and men are continually reminded of their sinfulness and the loving mercy and forgiveness of God. For example, no one can really pray unless he is willing to deal with the inner condition of hurt and rebellion, whether it be recent or of long standing. In the Collect for the First Sunday after Easter, we acknowledge the fact that God has given His only Son to die for men's sins and to rise again so they may live by faith in Him; and we pray, "grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that we may always serve thee in pureness of living and truth."⁵ What greater wickedness than to judge all because of one; what greater truth than to know that all sinful men have a loving Saviour?

Men can and do say with the disillusioned psalmist, "all men are liars," but after they have pondered the statement awhile as Christians, they usually admit they, too, were a bit hasty and declare that all men, even liars, can have Christ as their Saviour.

May this be one petition of the pilgrim's litany on Holy Island: "From all hasty utterances of impatience; from the retort of irritation and the taunt of sarcasm; from all infirmity of temper in provoking or being provoked; from love of unkind gossip, and from all idle words that may do hurt, save us and help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord."⁶

Dear God, help us to find our way out of the past into Thy way of forgiveness and love. Help us to be honest and to make the directions of our days conform to what we know of Thee in Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose Name we pray and in whose Way we would walk. Amen.

V WEDNESDAY

The Life of the Fellowship

There is a well-preserved Norman doorway to the ancient Priory on Lindisfarne which invites all men to enter and find new life, even among the ruins. That gateway to new life might well be labeled "the life of the fellowship" and the invitation to enter, "Draw near with faith."⁷ Once the pilgrim goes through the gateway, he beholds the rainbow arch which still stands and is a graceful and beautiful symbol of God's promise, "Lo, I am with you alway."⁸ This promise of His to the fellowship which commemorated His death, resurrection, and ascension by "continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house,"⁹ is still valid.

The life of the fellowship is a continuous performance, beginning back in the first century and still in business. It is not like a freshman's experiment in physics, of rubbing one's hand on a piece of fur and then touching metal, which produces a beautiful spark, but only one spark per rub. It is, rather, like the life of a family, lived out together day by day, growing in interdependence and in mutual love, each member helping to fulfil the life of every other member.

Since the life of the fellowship for most Christians is lived out in the parish family we need to ask, "What is a parish?"

Dr. John Heuss, rector of Trinity Church in New York City, made an attempt to be concrete about the true work of a parish, in contrast to the usual limited, feeble expression of this purpose as evidenced in some parishes. He said that "the constant parade

of trivialities which the typical Church program offers to the public . . . are only rarely related to the real issues which are clawing the soul of modern man to shreds."¹⁰ This should set all Christians thinking about what the God-given functions of a parish really are and to take a look at their own parish churches in the light of them.

What is a parish? It is a small fragment of the Body of Christ, a one-celled unit of the Christian fellowship. The parish is the whole Christian Church in miniature, "the little church in your house and mine,"¹¹ manifesting all the marks of the Church which were laid down in the first primitive attempts at forming a local congregation. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship."¹² One parish, for example, is set down in the midst of a great city containing some 8,200,000 souls, with over half of them still to be won for Christ. The Christian mission of this parish to these millions deals with "two entities more important than any nation or all of them: God, and a human being's soul."¹³ And the unit through which God is mediated to the human soul is just such a local parish church, and its members. Every parish and every Christian is the Church in "this place" and must bear witness of these things.

It is in the story of the Ascension, as related in The Acts of the Apostles, that the faithful are given their marching orders as members of the Christian fellowship. "Ye shall receive power, . . . and ye shall be witnesses unto me."¹⁴ And those who heard returned to Jerusalem and carried out His plan to save the world.

"Ye shall be witnesses unto me." That is what a parish still is for.

This all sounds wonderful and dramatic and Christians are prepared to believe this is the task to which they have been called as His disciples. But then the business of carrying out Jesus'

command falls to them and they falter and all too often make a sorry mess of it.

The Church, which is often described as a hospital, contains too many patients who fail to get well. The Church, often described as a school, contains too many pupils who fail to learn. Is this, then, the Church's witness to the world, sick and ignorant disciples who know not the Christ whom they claim as Lord? Should Churches then close the hospital and school and go out of business? No, for "ye shall be witnesses unto me." The Christian Church has, fundamentally, only one thing to give this torn and harried world: Jesus Christ. It is from Him we get and then share such essential things of life we cannot manufacture or buy: a Christian sense of humor and perspective; Christian courage, intelligence, and faith; and hope in the eternal purposes of God. We are all ultimately dependent on God who made us, and we are responsible to Him for all we think, say, and do. We are indeed His witnesses.

Men are often disillusioned by the conduct of those labeled "Christians," which is many times shockingly contrary to the ideal of one who is supposed "to follow Christ." This not only causes outsiders to remain outside, but causes those who come into the Church with a shining faith to fall away. The only way a man can show forth Christ and bear witness to His life is to live as a Christian, work as a Christian, think as a Christian, speak as a Christian, be a Christian parent, boss, and friend, and in all his relationships make real these words from an old hymn, "The touch of His hand on mine."

"Ye shall be witnesses unto *me*."

Give us courage, O God, to admit when we've been wrong, to make restoration no matter what the cost to pride, and to seek from Thee the way to do it. Let not the word or conduct of another control us or entice

us to words and actions we'll regret. Keep us remembering to find and clean out the rotten places in our lives, so that we shall not have to confess and restore so often; in the name of Christ. Amen.

V THURSDAY

Stumbling Blocks

We have all been guilty of putting stumbling blocks in the path of another instead of exercising the ministry of reconciliation. When anyone fails to relate what he believes to what he is or can be, the Spirit of Christ is not made manifest in him. When one hears the words of "The Invitation,"¹⁵ at the Service of Holy Communion, about being in love and charity with his neighbors, and accepts them and then goes away and engages in unloving talk or action, this is treason to the Church and the failure of Christian discipleship.

Do the organizations and activities of the parish to which you belong show forth Christ? The members of the Body of Christ must let everything be done to the glory of God and to the edification of men. All the activities of individuals and groups in the parish in some way must become ministering and healing actions, making Christ known at every meeting, in every program and activity. Every Christian always needs to ask, "Is it me, O Lord, standin' in the need of prayer?"¹⁶

"It is a profound Christian truth that self-righteous people are hard and blind and that relationships can be maintained only as we are able to forgive because we, too, need forgiveness."¹⁷ Be quick to see and apply this truth and never overlook it when you pray the Lord's Prayer. The Christian's God-given task is reconciliation, for has he not so known Christ? As members of

any fragment of Christ's flock, men must do all they do in the parish to the glory of God, whether it be money-raising, renovating of buildings, sewing, table-setting, or ushering. There is only one way to measure Christian conduct and activities—by the Spirit of Christ. Do some measuring, then, and make it personal, beginning with "me."

Surely the wrongs of violence and bigotry and ignorance and neglect in cities and nations of the world must be righted and the Churches must do all in their power to help by speaking up for the truth and holding before the world the meaning of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Churches must work within a responsible society, ministering swiftly and adequately to all human need.

But for most Christians the Kingdom is advanced or retarded by how they act as members of parish groups, how they serve on committees and arrange programs; whether when they speak the truth they do so in love, and when they disagree they do so in the spirit of Christ, and when trying situations arise they do not lose control but exercise patience. Whatever Christians do and the way they do it reveals their concept of the ministry placed in their hands by Christ; and so they are His witnesses, or they are not.

Jesus spoke often about doing "the works of him that sent me."¹⁸ If there be oneness with Christ in the Christian fellowship, all members shall be doing "the works of him that sent me." "The primary concern of all Christians is that the greatness and goodness of God be made known to all men, to show and interpret God's love to the entire world—for this is what God most wants men to know."¹⁹

The ministry of a parish, then, is not only the inspired and inspiring ministry of music and the beautiful orderly services, but the personal commitment of each member of Christ's Body

to the "Bounden Duty" assigned when the newly confirmed were made members of Christ's Church—"to follow Christ, to worship God every Sunday in his Church; and to work and pray and give for the spread of his kingdom."²⁰

Living and working together as brethren in Christian love by God's help just about covers the manner of life set for members of a parish church who are quite literally obeying Jesus' final earthly command to "be witnesses unto me," with the promise of God's power. All parishes are parts of the Body of Christ, and the life of each segment of the fellowship must be lived near Him, with His life at the center of its life.

Holy Island today is tranquil without being dull. In the far past, when the stone fragments stood complete in glory, men worshiped God and sang His praise and the sacrament of His life was kept at the heart of the monks' life. Holy Island also had its parish church, and still does, but it was and is apart from the ruins of any past. A Christian parish ministers to its community and its world as a living organism, filled with the power of God, working the works of Him who sends all men to serve Him even as they worship Him. God's Word, Christ, is the lighthouse which will guide members of any parish fellowship over the shoals and shallows.

If disappointment comes our way this day, good Lord, turn it into blessing and let us learn from it. Let it be a warning not to covet too much for self alone, and let it act upon our hearts without leaving scars of bitterness; in Christ's name. Amen.

V FRIDAY

God's Christ

On Holy Island, the stems of the fossil sea lily, known locally as St. Cuthbert's beads, are sought zealously by the islanders and visitors. These beads are found by working on hands and knees in the sand, turning over tiny shells and other jetsam. As with pearls, it may take the seeker years to secure the right sizes and number to make into a graded necklace.

St. Cuthbert sits and toils to frame,
The sea-born beads that bear his name.²¹

A lot of time has been spent this Lent in searching for small blessings on Holy Island, for spiritual victories, insights, joys, glimpses, directions, and other beads to string upon the pilgrim's new and more dedicated way of life; and pilgrims marvel over each day lived consistently and rewardingly, which they are able to add permanently as a bead to their character and memory.

Time spent on Holy Island opens men's eyes wider to many things, especially the need for greater personal discipline and commitment, and the need for rethinking certain aspects of their Christian faith. But unless men behold and possess the life offered to them by Jesus Christ, who is the center of any Holy Island, they will still be lacking. So turn and look beyond the testimony of His earth-living and Cross-dying to His promise of "forever with us."

Man has said, "I believe in God," ever since he built his first altar, which set him forever apart from the other creatures. Most men *do* believe in God. There is something in man which makes

him eternally dissatisfied with himself and his kind alone. He wants something outside himself to hold to, and he knows God is that something. But who is God?

The Bible is the great source book about God and a faithful record of man's developing idea of God. But even in the Bible men find the Eternal God being slandered and being given the weaknesses of men. Early in the Bible He is described as inconsistent, vindictive, warlike, and jealous, a tribal God. Later on, however, the prophets described Him as just, wise, full of loving-kindness, a good and dependable God. But even though many things were learned about Him throughout history, a great gap still existed which had to be bridged before man in his finiteness could fully understand the length and breadth of God's kind of love, and the plan which He desired man of his own free choice to follow. From the beginning of man's reaching after God he sensed there was a *Way* that led to *Life*. But how was it possible for God in His infiniteness to get across to finite man a living, clearly marked map of the road?

A story may start one toward an answer. A distinguished professor was having an intellectual struggle over the meaning of Christ's life, the reason for it; he did not believe Christ was sent by God. One day as he pondered the problem, a bird flew into his study. It grew panicky when it found itself so confined and almost exhausted itself in frenzied efforts to beat a way to freedom through a closed window high up under the eaves. The compassionate professor did everything that was *humanly* possible to show the bird a way out, but he failed. Suddenly the thought came to him, "Why, I would have to become a bird before I could ever help this sparrow find the open window. He could only understand my motive and desire for his good if I were one with him." Through this simple experience and conclusion, he saw the meaning of Jesus Christ

and the reason for Him—to show all men the way out of their prison house of error, sin, futility, and death. God had the audacity at a definite moment in history to appear at last as a *Man*, and thenceforth men have known who God is and what He desires of all; and men have called Him Saviour.

At one of the evening forums in a religious emphasis week at an eastern college, a Jewish girl asked, "What more of God do you as a Christian possess than we, as Jews?" The speaker reminded her of the story of Madame Curie's search for radium: how she believed in its existence, could measure its tremendous energy, knew where to find it; but only after long years of sacrificial labor, sustained only by her *faith*, did she at last produce a mere smudge in the bottom of an earthen dish which flashed its message out of the darkness, and Madame Curie could say and prove, "*This is radium.*" Just so, through the long weary years men believed in God, knew where He might be found, felt His power, but could never really see Him until at last there flashed out of the darkness of the ages a light which was Christ; and men could say and prove, because of what He was and did, "*This is God—He is God*"; men could say for the first time "come and see,"²² and point to Jesus Christ. Even though His years were few as man's on earth, Christians believe His Spirit remains as an indelible imprint nevermore to be erased or forgotten, but ever ready to release the power of God and change the lives of men.

Dear Father, enrich the areas of our confinement, whether they be the narrow limits of a hospital bed or the even narrower limits of a closed mind. Grant us new discoveries of spirit as we allow Thee to lead us across barriers of space and time and prejudice, and new dimensions of heart as we grow more patient with those who would minister to us or teach us; in Christ's name. Amen.

V SATURDAY

Christ Is God

No longer must men struggle endlessly to explain about God, to conjure up what He is like. They simply look at Christ and say, "God has shown all of Himself in Jesus Christ that we are capable of seeing," and it is enough. Men have this treasure—oneness with God through Christ, and it was for all men and for their salvation that He came.

Canon B. H. Streeter of Oxford, whose research and brilliant studies aided man's grasp of the truth in the New Testament, wrote many books about God and Jesus Christ, but only when he discovered *The God Who Speaks*²³ and the God who controls was his life different and powerful in Christian witness. This dignified scholar, at last, despite his earlier quest for the historical Jesus, found the reality of Christ's presence in his own life. He found the living God in a man, Christ Jesus, and life was ever after more wonderful, because he began to live under His laws and His will.

Yes, most men believe in God. But it is of the utmost importance for men to believe in God as He really is, rather than in a distortion of Him. It is important for men to realize that Jesus Christ is like God, *is* God; that He is the only true and complete picture of the Eternal God; that He is the Mind, the Spirit, back of the universe. He tells us that love is what God wants men to choose, not hate; that humility is God's way instead of arrogance; and that magnanimity is better than pettiness. These are eternal values, established by God and taught by

His Son. Whether men like them or not, there they stand. They make up a picture of God and His will for all men. If anything is added or subtracted, the result is a caricature. What is God like? He is like Jesus Christ. Therefore, the most important questions for those who "believe in God" to answer are: "Whom say ye that I am?"²⁴ and "Lovest *thou* me?"²⁵

Just think of the wonder and the power and the glory of it! He is caring for all men supremely, loving them limitlessly, forgiving them understandingly, desiring them eternally, and patiently attempting to show them the more excellent way—the way that truly leadeth unto Life! "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."²⁶ "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."²⁷ "I and my Father are one."²⁸ No wonder Jew and Gentile alike sought Him and cried, "We would see Jesus,"²⁹ because in Him men see God manifested in as full measure as one can behold and dare to encompass.

In Jesus Christ is found the God in whom men believe; and it is to Him the pilgrim turns on Holy Island, and seeks to place Him in the midst of life.

Dear Lord, we know that this day has come from Thee to be lived for Thee—all of it, every hour, minute, and second of it. We accept Thy gift and treasure it, but we need Thine aid to live it fully and worthily. We ask that at any moment when our movement is slowed by a solid wall of frustration within or without, Thou wilt lead us along the wall until we find a door; for Christ's sake. Amen.

Holy Week

VI PALM SUNDAY

Sorrow's Comfort

THERE is a castle on Holy Island on top of Beblowe Crag overlooking the North Sea, erected as a fort in the sixteenth century to protect the mainland of Northumbria against border raiders. The good men who made the island of Lindisfarne holy would have declared the ruined castle (now restored and lived in) a mute witness to the futility of such secular defense against both barbarian invaders and spiritual evil. They would have pointed instead to Longstone Island's tern-haunted lighthouse, which was built to warn seamen of the dangerous rocks lying jagged beneath the water's surface; and these holy men would have reminded all men of the constant danger of the temptations below the surface of life, declaring the lighthouse a better symbol of the right kind of faith which warns, protects, and guides, than the castle.

Invasion of some kind is always imminent in every life. Take uncomforted sorrow as an ever-present threat to peace of heart and mind. The temptation to sorrow endlessly is one of the weak and vulnerable spots of defense on the mainland of life. The concept of a Holy Island was designed for offering the sufficient strength of God for handling all sorrow. A true story will partially illustrate this.

Once upon a time there was a little girl who had a great big doll. It was a beautiful doll with a china face, real hair, and eyes that closed; and it was dressed in the finest lavender silk.

The little girl loved her doll with a possessive and passionate love. She treasured it above every other thing she owned. One day she was sitting in the back yard watching a ball game one of her brothers had arranged for the neighborhood, with her doll resting snugly in her arms.

All went well until her oldest brother swung at a ball, missed, and let the bat slip out of his hands. It flew over and hit the precious doll squarely on the head, breaking the fragile china to bits. Mary wept bitterly over the loss of her doll. Her brother did his best to tell her how sorry he was, that it was an accident, that he'd save his money and buy her a new doll. But to Mary the loss was irreparable. It was impossible to repair the doll's head and no new doll could ever take its place. No word could comfort the sorrowing child.

The ball game was spoiled and a pall hung over the household until father came home. He realized wisely that there was only one thing to do, although he would willingly have given anything or done anything to assuage his child's grief. He said little, but took her in his arms and held her close to him until the sobs ceased at last and the tears were finally dried. He knew that soon or late the hurt would heal, even though the memory of it remained; that soon other tasks and other toys would ease the great burden of loss. But for the moment all he could do was hold her in his arms. Healing and comfort for the child came from the father's understanding sympathy, his intense desire to share her sorrow and take it away; the healing power of his love touched her and did its work within her "broken" heart. A good father does care for his children. He loves them, and his arms around them are the outward and visible sign of this love.

Men have learned from Christ that God is the good Father who comforts His children in the midst of sorrow, when they allow Him. Jesus told how God knows and cares about every sorrow one goes through, how He will wipe away all tears. That

is why those who believe Him and believe in Him do not wail out in agony the eternal *Why?* and break their hearts over a mystery. Nor do they indulge in an orgy of bitterness, cursing God for their loss and hurt. They don't know why sorrow has come. They don't really need to know, for they know Him, and know that somehow He will make it all right.

There are many ways of reacting to sorrow and suffering: by self-pity; by a stoical "bloody but unbowed head" philosophy; or by resignation, "it's the Lord's will, so be it." These are distortions of the Christian attitude. But even Christians ask sometimes, Why doesn't God spare His children sorrow?

There is no explanation of suffering and sorrow offered in the New Testament, but it is made clear that God has identified Himself fully with human suffering, has gotten into sorrow as deeply as possible, thus enabling men to face it fearlessly and to walk through it by His help. God gave His only-begotten Son to suffer at the hands of wicked men, who were His creation, too—and how He must suffer over their perversities. "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow."¹ Even God Himself chose not to be exempt from sorrow and suffering. He still suffers because of men; yet He ever comforts them when they weep in sorrow or wince in pain, and bring both to Him. In the New Testament, calamity is taken as an opportunity and turned into a testimony for God. It is not something to escape from; instead, one is to use it because God is there, too. Part of the Good News of the Gospel is that suffering and sorrow are met and overcome, and a way of life is blazed through them by God's oneness with men in them. This is the Christian way of victory over these things, although it may be a slow journey of growth in time rather than a quick miracle. Christ is identified with man's suffering in every age, and that is how it can be borne.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."² Mourners who believe in God shall be comforted. The very word *comfort*, taken literally, means "strengthened by being with." The companionship of God is better than a "vein of iron," and men gain exquisite comfort from the fact of the presence of the Father who knows, understands, and shares all. "Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you."³

There is a story told of an old Negro woman whose people were all dead. She lived alone. Asked one day who lived there, she replied with radiant countenance, "me and Jesus." The Negro Spiritual expresses it rightly: "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen—Glory Hallelujah." Blessed are those in sorrow who believe in Him, for they have opened their hearts to receive God's comforting and sustaining presence.

Sorrow melts hard hearts and brings men to God in utter dependence; and they cling to all they know of Him through Jesus Christ, until their minds and hearts are at peace. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death . . . thou art with me."⁴ "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there . . . even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."⁵ Sorrow which no one else can assuage, men bring to God through Christ.

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility; Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR PALM SUNDAY

VI MONDAY BEFORE EASTER

No Troubled Hearts

Only when a violin string is bound to the instrument, and drawn tighter and tighter, is its purpose fulfilled. It is really free only when it is stretched tautly to the frame and tested; only then can it be tuned to sing its sweetest song. Something like this was meant when a famous singer once said of a young artist, "What a wonderful voice she would have if something would break her heart." It would be too easy for a loving God to spare us and make us spoiled darlings, as some parents do their children, good for nothing. Character and maturity come only by loving firmness.

When a bone is broken, the whole body rushes to the rescue. This is true for an infection; it is also true for "broken" hearts and diseased minds. In much the same way God marshals the inner resources of our souls so that they can be strengthened to stand strong in the face of all adversity. Jesus said from the Cross at the most excruciating extremity of human need, "My God, my God . . ." ⁸ and that was His comfort and His strength. Through experience and knowledge of God's comfort in sorrow, there is a bond between all who mourn. Sorrow borne gives the capacity to make others strong in time of weakness and men share what they have learned: that tears bring a release from spasms of grief and help wash the hurt away; that men can never escape sorrow or suffering, or hide from either, but must meet them, and, as they do, their souls are enlarged to bear whatever comes; that dependence upon God keeps them from self-centeredness and self-pity and releases them from

morbid bitterness; that sorrow and suffering can bring people closer to God—"the great sorrows of death and personal loss [likewise the little sorrows] make us quiet, make us listen," some of us for the first time, and His voice brings assurance; that sensitiveness to the needs of others in sorrow comes through our own sorrows. Sorrow and suffering are great teachers for His disciples who are willing learners.

Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. As comforter and comforted He could say, "Come unto me, be with me in God's presence where I have found comfort." Because of Him no man need suffer alone, and through Him God suffers with His world.

Jesus taught men many things, especially the vast meaning of "Our Father." He reminded men of the mourner's eventual happiness beyond shock, numbness, and sharp sense of loss, and He promised never to leave them comfortless. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God . . ."7 who cares for you and whom you can trust no matter what happens. Sorrow does test men's faith in God the Father, but when they learn to trust Him completely, God deals adequately with every sorrow. God is life and therefore a part of all sorrow. He is in it, around it, above it, and beneath it. He holds men in His arms as fathers hold their own children, and He longs to make all sorrow His own. Truly "underneath are the everlasting arms,"8 in the sense that His presence gives a feeling of reality and security when adversity comes. In time of sorrow the greatest need is to relate knowledge of God, and belief in God, to the situation at hand and then let go of it and let God take over.

The sorrow of a little girl over her broken doll, and comfort for her, is the same as the sorrow of one to whom has come a vaster loss. All those who let Him, God the Father holds close

until they find release. God loves all His children equally and cares for each one the same, like a good human father with four children who gives not one-fourth of his love to each, but all of his love to each child. God doesn't need to divide His love, for God is love.

All who sorrow and suffer, much or little, can come unto Him and grieve in His presence, knowing He will dry all tears, and loose them from aching hearts, and enlarge and strengthen their souls to bear. He will help suffering men to find sufficient light in the darkness to walk by, for God the Father is always near, through Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit, to hear, to strengthen, and to bless.

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified; Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR MONDAY BEFORE EASTER

VI TUESDAY BEFORE EASTER

Where Each One Fits In

"One of the greatest journeys anyone can ever make is the journey from a question mark to an exclamation point."⁹ And sometimes the journey is long. The world has had its millions of question marks about Jesus Christ. But on that first Palm Sunday, at the beginning of a week packed with so much meaning, Jesus forced the choice—accept Me or reject Me; ye cannot ignore Me.

The question mark is as hard to erase from some minds as is evidence of the past from Holy Island. That is why it is important to read the Gospel evidences concerning Christ's suffering and death which are gathered together in the Prayer Book for Holy Week and ponder them in the light of the exclamation point given on that first Palm Sunday when Jesus entered Jerusalem on a colt.

The Gospel story of Holy Week faces men with a choice, which puts them among the crowd pecking away at Jesus, hostile and superior toward Him, finally rejecting and killing Him; or which puts them in the forefront of the spontaneous, enthusiastic, self-forgetting Palm Sunday crowd crying Hosannas. Perhaps it is not so sharply either/or. There was no debate for the latter group, no cautious trial balance before acting; they spread their garments before Him with zest and exhilaration, for to them Jesus was no longer a question mark but an exclamation point. Men either wave palm branches and cry Hosanna believing that Jesus is the Christ, "He that cometh in the name of the Lord,"¹⁰ and in this acceptance find triumph, victory, and salvation in Him; or they reject Him and get ready to crucify Him afresh with no Hosannas on their hardened lips.

And yet this enthusiastic public demonstration on Palm Sunday fizzled out, and five days later the King climbed Calvary's hill alone. The question mark was still there, for the certainty turned to dust when the long awaited Messiah was arrested by Roman soldiers without raising a hand to strike back.

Was it love for Him and faith in Him which they expressed in waving palm branches and shouting their Hosannas? Or was it wishful thinking and the result of crowd hysteria? The expectation of the Messiah, so long unfulfilled, might have been the cause.

Jesus had friends who had chosen His way, acting as a de-

pendable network in Jerusalem, who were alerted to His purposes, acquainted with His mind, and ready to act for His cause. For when the colt was sought by the two disciples the strange directions and the password given by Jesus worked perfectly. They went obediently and untied the colt, and when they were challenged, "What do ye, loosing the colt?" they replied "The Lord hath need of him." "And they let them go."¹¹ The magic password was "The Lord hath need of him." The colt was yielded by its owner because Jesus' need was given priority without question. When men choose His way in love and faith, they put everything they possess on a priority basis for God.

Visits to Holy Island are necessary whenever the question mark struggles to replace the exclamation point. To be immersed in the very atmosphere of such struggles as took place on Lindisfarne centuries ago, strengthens one's faith. The monks who went out from Lindisfarne to face and conquer a pagan world did not know the "grand strategy" but were certain of Christ's command, "go ye."

The great need was and is for faith in Jesus Christ, proceeding from love. In the Father-Son-Master-Disciple relationship, trust and love are essential, based on the belief that God knows best. There is no room and no time in such a loving relationship for endless argument, or for seeking final proof, questioning the wisdom of God the Father. The attitude that made Lindisfarne a Holy Island, built cathedrals, and provided martyrs centered in a wholly-given-to-God commitment.

Intelligent people choose, take a stand, line up with the constructive forces of love, kindness, and healing, rather than remain aloof. God asks all men to trust Him and to believe in His Son. "This is my beloved Son: hear him."¹² And He asks men to stand with Him for the forces of light. "He that is not with

me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."¹³

The colt episode on Palm Sunday reminds Christians that their choice commits them to serve Him in faith, placing their time, strength, minds, skills, and hearts at His disposal on a priority basis, without hesitation, without question, and without holding anything back when the word comes—"The Lord hath need of them."

O Lord God, whose blessed Son, our Saviour, gave his back to the smiters and hid not his face from shame; Grant us grace to take joyfully the sufferings of the present time, in full assurance of the glory that shall be revealed; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR TUESDAY BEFORE EASTER

VI WEDNESDAY BEFORE EASTER

Part and Parcel of His Plan

Dorothy Sayers, in *The Man Born to Be King*, has Jesus say: "I can offer you no proof. I can only say, Here I am; believe in me."¹⁴ Jesus revealed His own choice on Palm Sunday; He accepted the hard truth and the stern reality of Saviourhood, and His choice was set. What about yours?

The flow of the Gospels during Holy Week is swift and deep in the direction of the ultimate choice: acceptance of Jesus Christ the Son of the living God as Saviour, or rejection. Christians know the score, or should; and because they are solid in their belief that man on his own, without God, can achieve no ultimate good, they see the need of a Saviour. Is this

the Gospel you have received? Is He the Christ, *your* Lord and Saviour? Are there at least glimmers and intimations which pull you toward eventual acceptance? Or is He still a shadowy substance, a dream not yet come true?

It is dangerous to read the Palm Sunday story in the Gospel of St. Mark,¹⁵ for in it the question mark concerning the saving Person of Christ has been erased forever. Here is the truth revealed at last, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. St. Mark's words, poured forth with such courage and conviction, continue to roar like a lion down through the centuries and strike with a loud note of triumph.

The palm branch, often fashioned as a small cross for distribution in churches on Palm Sunday, is the ancient symbol of the first day of Holy Week, cherished as a memento of identification by those who are members of God's army, awaiting His orders, descendants of that crowd which waved palm branches and spread their garments in front of Him and cried Hosanna.

The portentous events of Holy Week are worthy of meditation on Holy Island, until they come alive for the pilgrim and fill him with power and a sure sense of Jesus Christ as living Lord and present Saviour, "who for us men and for our salvation" suffered death upon the Cross.

The Good News from the Gospels is that God was and is in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord . . . Hosanna in the highest."¹⁶

The psalmists often penned the question of men's souls accurately, and this was good news for their day. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him?"¹⁷ All men have stood in the presence of such vast mysteries of the universe and have wondered humbly,

"Where do I fit into this plan of God's creation?" Christianity has declared the answer. Men are God's approach to His world; through them His will is done, or is left undone, as they choose. Jesus Christ has shown each one that to God he is the most important person in the world. Only Christianity makes such a declaration for man's supreme dignity and worth; only the Christian Church lays such stress on the individual soul as God's instrument.

God made men in His own spiritual image; that is, He placed in humanity the marks of His nature, His likeness, as a son bears resemblance to his father. He has given men the capacity to know Him and to have fellowship with Him; He has given men freedom, mind, reason, imagination; He has given men the power to understand themselves and others; He has given men dignity, worth, responsibility; He has given men a purpose which is one with His own—the production of good, the defeat of evil. When men fail in this, they sin. He has given men even the remedy for their failures—forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice of Himself upon a cross, to bring men to their knees, at one with His purpose for them. So there is no need for people to ask, as so many do, helplessly and without any expectation of an answer, "Where do I fit into God's plan for His world?" For each created soul is part and parcel of that plan and can contribute to it, wherever he finds himself.

Assist us mercifully with thy help, O Lord God of our salvation; that we may enter with joy upon the meditation of those mighty acts, whereby thou hast given unto us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR WEDNESDAY BEFORE EASTER

VI MAUNDY THURSDAY

Faith, Obedience, and Fearless Fellowship

There are plentiful and available sources for knowledge of God as Lord of the Universe and therefore accurate and final answers to this question, "Where do I fit in?" The Bible, the Church's testimony, human reason, and Christian witness are all sources for knowledge of God and His plan for men. But men shall never make sense out of this world until they turn to God Himself for the full revelation of the purpose of life, and then make a personal venture of faith on what they learn about Him, continuing to seek constantly His design and designs for them as minute parts of the whole.

The wonderful story about a child and a jigsaw puzzle map of the world never grows old. Given the puzzle, the child put it together so amazingly fast his parents asked him how he did it. The child replied, "Oh, it was easy, for there was a boy on it." The father of the child had failed to notice that on the other side of the map was a picture of Jesus as a young lad. That is why when a man asks, "Where do I fit into this complicated puzzle of the world's life?" he usually turns to the other side and finds the figure of a Man, like unto every man, and he understands and puts the puzzle together quickly. Christ is that Man, with a cross as His background.

What does God expect of us who believe that Christ is His gift, His answer, to human need and perplexity?

(1) God expects us to have *faith* in Him because of Christ and to let that faith in His ultimate purpose of peace and

brotherhood, honesty and virtue, and release from the powers of darkness forever shine through our daily thoughts and doings. He asks of us the outward and visible manifestation of His inward and spiritual grace given unto us. The way men face life makes life; their attitude toward life makes it drab or vital. If men believe God is for them and for everyone, and is working to hold them, through their own choosing, to His heavenly laws for earth life, who can be against them? If men believe God is all in all and that nothing else really matters in the long span of eternal values, nothing *can* separate them from Him.

In the woods outside Oslo, Norway, during most of World War II, Bishop Eivind Berggrav was behind barbed wire, a prisoner of the Nazis. But his spirit of faith went unconfined to cheer and give courage to those under stress and persecution throughout his beloved land. In his loneliness God was his strength. In his sacrifice he discovered his niche of witnessing for Christ. His faith was the dominant note of courage needed in the Scandinavian countries then and, since the war, in the World Council of Churches which his leadership helped to spark; and even though he is now retired his faith still shines as "a candle in the house"¹⁸ for Christians to see.

(2) God expects of men *loving obedience*. It is of little use to believe in Him and His laws of justice, mercy, and truth unless they form the basis of one's conduct. If men love Him and believe in Him, they shall gladly obey Him and serve Him in any way He asks. "This is how we can be sure that we know him—by obeying his commands,"¹⁹ and we should be constantly seeking His directions.

Ordinary people who obey God work miracles. So often, when men ask for directions for getting to a particular destination, they write them down and memorize them thoroughly,

but until they follow them and go, of what value are the directions? So it is with God's commands. He has sent His Son to tell men His plan for achieving healthy, harmonious human relationships, but they will work *only* when one individual after another begins to live free from resentment, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. These are God's own directions, and men can never get to their goal of oneness for the human family until they come to themselves, are really converted to His way and will, and begin to follow His leading in faith.

(3) God expects of men faith and obedience, *loving and fearless fellowship*, and a close working together with others, knowing there is strength in numbers and greater influence in a united front. God does not expect men to face the difficulties and dangers of the Christian adventure on this planet alone, without an earthly fellowship as well as a heavenly. This fellowship is charged with knowing Christ and making Him known. This fellowship is charged with its own enlargement and strengthening, a world-wide concern and love for humanity, concern and love for all God's children, and an immovable stand for righteousness.

Where do you and I fit in? Is there not some answer by now? Paul gave as his answer, "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."²⁰ All men are important individually and as a whole, for they are single bricks in the wall of God's Kingdom on earth, held together by loving obedience to His laws. The best good news is this: that man and God through Christ are an unbeatable combination. This is the Church and upon this combination rests God's plan for the redemption of the world. Men are called by Him to be sons, doers of the Father's work and will. In so doing they are one with Christ, and the life He called abundant is theirs to have and to share. Jesus Himself is man's certainty. The basis of

Jesus' expectations and hopes in men is their answer to His pleading question, "Lovest thou me?"²¹ On this simple and personal basis all men declare themselves.

Just as God has placed masses of birds on every pinnacle and ledge of the small islands of The Farnes and in every crevice and chasm of the larger islands, giving to each bird knowledge of its own nesting place and where to lay its eggs, so He grants to all men the sure knowledge of where each one belongs, at one with Him who made and sustains all mankind.

Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, did institute the Sacrament of his Body and Blood; Mercifully grant that we may thankfully receive the same in remembrance of him, who in these holy mysteries giveth us a pledge of life eternal; the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR MAUNDY THURSDAY

VI GOOD FRIDAY

Anticipation of Death's End

When spring comes to Holy Island, the pilgrims there are certain once again that God is not dead, and their attention is focused on an empty Cross, from which light shines to puncture whatever darkness surrounds them. The pilgrims' certainty is augmented by the frenzy of emerging life nature always provides for background, "earth's shouting of victory, and flinging up its colored cap to the sky."

On Holy Island men never tire of discussing the Resurrection,

for it brings reassurance that, though men die, they do not die eternally; and this bolsters their faith that God's roaring loom of time is weaving an enduring fabric of life for living beyond history. They want to shout with Lazarus: "There is no Death; There is only Life: Death is the fear between man's *no* and man's *yes* to God."²²

Paul spends half the fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians trying to answer the question, "How are the dead raised up?"²³ But to explain *how* the dead are raised up is as difficult as giving exact answers to questions concerning the intricate workings of nature, the fascinating discoveries of science, or even the composing of a symphony.

It would be just as simple to ask, and equally impossible to answer, how does the heart beat or how does the eye see? We could give a word picture of the eye, for example, this unique member of the body, without which man would walk in darkness. We could liken the eye to a camera which takes pictures, colored pictures and moving pictures, without once reloading, and which focuses automatically in any light, at any distance. We could note that it also develops, prints, and files away countless pictures as mental images in a vast "morgue." But when the description is finished we still don't know how such a complex instrument could have been conceived and executed. But it was, for God was adequate to do it. Man's knowledge, or lack of it, does not affect his seeing. It would be foolish of any man, wouldn't it, to say "I don't believe it," just because he can't understand *how* the eye can possibly see?

Or take atom smashing. It is "old stuff" now, but just ask a scientist to explain what happens when an atom is smashed. He will probably say that the atom is not smashed or split at all, that it is transmuted into radiant energy. Atom smashing, which

brings to mind an infinitesimal speck disappearing into nothingness, is really a process which releases something the scientists call "radiant energy," and the atom is not destroyed at all, but transmuted, changed from one form to another.

Man can describe such miracles as sight and nuclear fission, but he cannot explain them.

So it is with the resurrection life and the question, "How are the dead raised up?" Inconceivable as all this is to finite minds, men have clung to the faith that continued existence and growth in some form after death are part of God's plan and in them is the fulfillment of man's deep-seated longing for completion.

God has planted within men their longings and their needs. He has also provided the means for satisfying them. The Christian faith declares that God is sufficient to satisfy all human hunger, whether for physical food or for hope beyond the curtain of time, and that men can trust Him.

Paul's illustration of the seed dying and bringing forth life in a new kind of body is good, and refers to the spiritual body as well as the physical. "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die."²⁴

Men are told that physical matter is never destroyed, but only changes its form, which is its death and resurrection, and no one questions this fact. Is it any less easy to believe that Spirit, which makes fleshly matter vibrant and creative, is not wasted eternally, but changes *its* form, and goes through a similar death and resurrection by God's grace? One of the famous Compton brothers, the physicist, tells us that "Science has found no cogent reason for supposing that what is of importance in a man can be buried in a grave," and he might have added, "forever dead."

*Almighty God, we beseech thee graciously to behold
this thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was*

contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR GOOD FRIDAY

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified; Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before thee for all estates of men in thy holy Church, that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve thee; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR GOOD FRIDAY

O Merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor desirest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live; Have mercy upon all who know thee not as thou art revealed in the Gospel of thy Son. Take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy Word; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy fold, that they may be made one flock under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR GOOD FRIDAY

VI EASTER EVEN

In Between Death and Life

Ever since the early Church got its belief straight on the subject of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it has made its choice of faith in Him who gives men the victory over the one certain,

supremely "tragic," universal, and inescapable fact of death—death of body and death of soul. The Christian Church states it succinctly on Easter Day: God is not dead, "He is risen"; and the faithful reply, "He is risen indeed." In Him, men, both body and soul, are alive.

Note how the practical Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, makes a swift change from his discussion of the tremendous experience of life after death, which his hearers had not yet experienced, to a word about the continuing earth-life which confronted them, and which confronts men today, too. He switched from talk about bodily resurrection and how man's natural body would be raised a spiritual body, and how God would give to each his own body, and ended with a great shout of praise—"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."²⁵

Paul gave as honest and complete an answer as he could to the question, "How are the dead raised up?" and then urged his brother Christians to live as fully as possible their life span on earth, and leave the rest to God. "Forasmuch as ye know [or ought to know] that your labour [on earth] is not in vain in the Lord."²⁶

Easter Day contains the surprise of being loved out of the shadowy darkness of death. And here men move into a different emphasis on death and resurrection, not God's death on a cross and resurrection from a grave, the death of Death, but the death of sinful self and rising to new life. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."²⁷ "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."²⁸

That is why Christians pray, "Grant that we, being dead unto sin, may live unto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in his death, may also be partakers of his resurrection."²⁹ The fact of resurrection from inner decay, as well as bodily disintegration, saves both earth-life and death from being a mockery.

There are those who walk around in bodies physically alive, yet they act like empty and hollow men, without animation, with minds, hearts, and souls dragged down to the least possible spiritual effectiveness. This lethargy and paralysis are due to the "sting" of sin, the "no" to God which man tossed off his prideful tongue before darkness set in. The main job on Holy Island is to quicken and arouse the spiritually dead, to strengthen their souls to stand, to bring about a resurrection so that men who appear dead may rise to life, a new life which will be ever expanding on both sides of the barrier of death, and to get man saying "yes" to God.

The Christian Gospel is full of love and hope for all, as Christ taught. Just so long as there is any sign of life in a person or a situation, efforts must be continued to raise men from deadness to life through sermons, work, prayers, love, imposing disciplines, regular trips to some Holy Island, and witness. "His Cross has made possible the forgiveness of our sins. His resurrection can also be our resurrection."³⁰

While on earth, Jesus formed an intimate fellowship to teach men how to live His way. But the first response, while significant, was not in the nature of a resurrection to power and full life. It took the Crucifixion and the Resurrection to wake men at last from the deadness of their ways and move them toward the full development of their potential life. The Gospel of resurrection is for both "the quick [the living] and the dead";³¹

and though "the wages of sin is death,"³² yet for every man "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."³³

Grant, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of thy blessed Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with him; and that through the grave, and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection; for his merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR EASTER EVEN

Eastertide

EASTER DAY

Risen with Christ

THE SHOCK treatment, used in many cases of mental illness, is not new. It was used on Good Friday. Yet the effect was not fully perceived and felt until Pentecost, the day the Holy Spirit possessed the disciples and waked them at last to the fact they had missed—that the way out of man's "hole" of impotence is dying to the demands of self and responding to the demands of God. Jesus Christ presented the demands of God in His very person as He confronted men with the evidence of their own sinfulness in the presence of God. However, instead of being convicted of sin and driven to repentance, they tried to kill God. The Crucifixion came as a shock treatment, and it is the one effective way today of helping men choose to die to the old self and rise to the new life with God. It is death unto sin which gives resurrection unto life, and the victory is the removal of sin, the "sting" of death. Penitence, fasting, and prayer should have helped men die to sin by now.

When any man begins to question himself as he is, and catches a vision of what he can become by God's grace, strange and wonderful things happen. So leave the question of bodily resurrection up to God and spend your time and energy in overcoming your own spiritual lethargy and refusal to rise from the dead. There is no resurrection without death. There is no spiritual change without rebirth. The seed's life does not quicken except it die to its seed-self in order to fulfil its potential

flower-self. So is the inner life of man which comes to full flower when man's "no" to God becomes "yes."

Christ's coming brought not only the realistic facing of life at every level, but He brought judgment to men in a way it could be accepted. Man realized finally it is his sin which led to the Crucifixion and that only by his own death unto sin could there be any resurrection for him; and man was thus enabled to face himself as he is, under the judgment of God, because he is assured of God's love and acceptance of him and that, no matter what his condition, however unloveable he might be, God does love him.

Since God died on a cross and men were shocked into facing themselves realistically, they have come to realize there is no use pretending. All men must face what they are in the presence of God and then turn away from their deadness, accepting the forgiveness and love and life which God offers.

The theme of resurrection is familiar to musicians and poets, scientists and historians, Christian zealots and half-way Christians alike. But until the Easter "song of victory" leads to the remaking of life by His life, the yielding to His way for man's way, what does it profit men to say, "He is risen," and yet remain grounded and unchanged in the presence of the miracle of God's love and concern for them, still refusing the power of grace made available to them through His Son?

But all this must come home to each one for himself. Each man must ascend Calvary's hill and die with Jesus Christ before discovering life with Him on the road to Emmaus, or finding more of Him in sermons, scripture reading, devotional disciplines, and worship. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."¹

The exciting last notes of César Franck's great *D-minor*

Symphony swell to a climax and arouse in the listener inner stirrings of God's presence, furnishing a background against which Paul's words, "how are the dead raised up?" stand out in bold relief and find their answer. Each day of resurrection is truly in the mood of Franck's D-minor music which makes an appropriate new setting for the ancient Easter theme: "Alleluia, He is risen." The symphony plays against the dark background of time and illumines it and fills men's souls with the ringingly exuberant truth that God is not dead, that man's cruelty has done its worst, but it cannot kill God forever. Because "He is risen," the light is still shining in the darkness, for the darkness can never put it out. He sees, in the brown, unsightly bulbs, the hidden flower created to bloom there. "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die."²

The Christian faith is in Christ, resurrected and triumphant, in whom is found "radiant energy" for living, and courage and comfort for the crossing in glory from one life to another. Christ loves all men, even when they are most difficult and hideous, and provides the courage, faith, and power for them to win the victory over sin, through dying to self and rising to newness of life.

There are many examples of challenge and response, which lead to the soul's growth, to spiritual resurrection, and to the answers to "How are the dead raised up?" When men reach dead ends, the challenge either kills their spirit or forces them to seek beyond themselves for finding a way out. This means death or resurrection. When men are numb or indifferent to the truth, the challenge of a glimpse of new light on the old truth either blinds them or forces them forward in their search. This means death or resurrection. When sin snatches away a man's dignity and power, it either leaves him bereft of hope or forces him to admit defeat of self and ask for help from

God—like the alcoholic who either stays in the gutter or accepts the challenge of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is death or resurrection. When God places thoughts in men's minds and there is an intense urge to take a step, they either dare to follow the leading with vigor, trusting Him who leads, or they falter and in fear shrink away. This is death or resurrection. When some great ideal challenges men, they must either cry, "No, it is too big for me," and leave the response up to another, or be caught by it and push ahead against odds to stir up God's-Kingdom-on-earth life. This brings death or resurrection. When the purpose of man's life is sought and found to be one with the purpose of the Christian Church and he becomes a fully identified member of the fellowship and accepts his share of responsibility, there is resurrection instead of death. When man sickens of the old life because of a vision of better things to be, when he comes to himself at last, he must either stay with the old life or strike out for God's way, born again spiritually. There must be either death or resurrection.

He is not "here"—only death is here. He is risen. He is where life is. Seek Him among the living, growing places of the mind and heart. Yield to His pull down to a good rootage.

Time apart on Holy Island opens men's eyes wider to many things, but, unless pilgrims catch a glimpse of His life offered to them forever, they will still be earthbound. So, finally, we turn and look beyond the living and the dying, and find death's end in Christ.

Almighty God, who through thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; We humbly beseech thee that, as by thy special grace preventing us thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy con-

tinual help we may bring the same to good effect; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR EASTER DAY

O God, who for our redemption didst give thine only-begotten Son to the death of the Cross, and by his glorious resurrection hast delivered us from the power of our enemy; Grant us so to die daily from sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through the same thy Son Christ our Lord. Amen.

—COLLECT FOR EASTER DAY

EASTER MONDAY

Looking Back on Holy Island

After any stay on Holy Island, leave-taking is always to the sound of muted trumpets, for the victories gained apart in the presence of God have been wrested from frequent defeats. As any pilgrim looks back on a visit to Holy Island and what it has meant to him, certain words and phrases and disciplines, associated with such a stay, remain as "St. Cuthbert's beads" and form a "necklace" to be worn around one's memories, helping to keep one encouraged and humble, convinced the findings were worth the search.

Prayer is one special, shining bead which has been added on the trip to Holy Island, and the pilgrims have become "bedesmen"* for Christ. Holy Island is for men who pray, for men

* Men who pray.

who shut themselves off from the world for a time of quiet with God, for learning more about Him and His way; who then return refreshed and better fitted for living once again in the world.

Lent is a Holy Island where pilgrims have spent a lot of time searching for small blessings, victories, insights, joys, glimpses, directions, and other "beads" to string upon their new and more dedicated way of life.

Pilgrims might have turned over the sands of time again and again without a "bead," but discovering even one response made, one moment of insight given, one microscopic evidence of inner growth, is a sign of life, is something to hang onto, for all life comes from a single cell, or two cells merged as one, which grow and make two, then many.

The buildings on Holy Island, which were frequented during the Lenten pilgrimage, especially the solemn, huge, and dark-red pile of ruins of the island's Norman Priory, have crumbled since the centuries of St. Aidan and St. Cuthbert and their holy clan. But the spirit of those men, and the hundreds who followed them, lives on and keeps alive Holy Island's other name, Lindisfarne, which means over the river Lindis to a place of retreat. Holy Island exists for the sake of all Christians—for renewing their strength, for recovering from wounds, for growing in grace to overcome the world, in the sense that Christ overcame it. But it also exists as a base of operations for all men, as in St. Aidan's day, where men come in close contact with the One in command, preparing themselves to go forth and bear witness to others and bring them to Christ.

The test of any time apart on Holy Island is how well pilgrims handle the pressures and frustrations and irritations of life upon their return. The quietness of such times apart must carry over as a portable island within, with the pilgrims' prayer

as a continuing contact: "Bless, O Lord, our new effort to respond to Thy love by loving."

In the fragments which remain on Holy Island, the past looms large; but out of the past comes God's promise to be with men always, and the restored parish church on the island bears witness to a continuity of prayer and praise. Because of this past and this continuity men are better able in these days to face solemnly certain basic questions of vital importance to their faith and to find answers to carry them through, undaunted and unafraid.

Has it been so with you on your visit to Holy Island? Has the reading of this book been a Holy Island? Remember that even in the little exchanges of the social amenities one can witness to the experiences on Holy Island. The citadels of self-will and self-love have been attacked. Have they come down? Has the Christian perfection sought for so valiantly been found where St. John, St. Paul, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Cuthbert, St. Teresa, St. Augustine, and all the other saints found it, in the life of Christian charity in relation to persons? Love is the essence of the transformed life, begun on Holy Island and continued in the life to be lived for Him day by day.

So live by God's grace, and "the God of peace be with you all."³

Extra Prayers for Any Day

INNER BRIGHTNESS

O God, we dedicate this day to brightness. Keep near unto us, that our spirits may be a light to one depressed or lonely. Make our faces shining reminders of home and happiness. Sweeten our words and soften the tone of our voices. In all our relationships, help us to make manifest illuminating love like Thine. Amen.

HONEST FACING

O Lord, when the light of Thy truth shines in our eyes, let us not blink and turn away. Help us to look squarely at whatever is revealed—our touchiness over some fancied slight, our resentment over even a hint of criticism, our condemnation of others, our insensitiveness to another's need. Make manifest Thyself as the light that shineth into our darkness so that we may see; through Christ. Amen.

NO DARKNESS

O Master, walk with us today. O Lord of the day and night, be Lord over every hour of our days and our nights. Lead us by the cloud of Thy presence while it is day; and when the night comes, pierce our darkness by the light of Thy continued nearness. May our trust in Thee not fail and may we walk unafraid. Amen.

ANOTHER DAY

O God, for another day to live and love, we thank Thee. May we live for Thee in each act of kindness, generosity, patience,

unselfishness, control of temper. Where Thou leadest may we follow; and O God, lead strongly so that we may surely follow; through Christ. Amen.

WHAT WE KNOW

So many mysteries beyond our knowing, Lord, cry within for solutions. Let us be content with what we can know—that life is sweet and to be lived to the utmost, that evil exists which can spoil it but that Thou hast come to save it—and act on that knowledge. And may we leave the rest to Thee; in Christ's name. Amen.

FOR OTHERS

Dear Father, we pray too often for ourselves and too seldom for others. Keep before us this day those for whom we should pray—the lonely ones to whom we might speak, the timid ones we might encourage in the Way, the hopeless ones who need a share of someone's hope, the unloved ones who need so much love; through Christ. Amen.

INNER PEACE

Open the doors of our hearts, dear Lord, and enter in. Deal with what Thou dost find of sin and contrariness, of discouragement and fear, of guilt and loneliness. Make peace in our hearts, good Lord, and send us forth with Thy strength to face the day and not run from a single encounter, certain that Thou art with us; in Christ's name. Amen.

NO WASTED YEAR

Bless, O Lord, all the days of our years, especially those of sudden growth or sudden pain. As our youth departs and age comes on quickly, help us to adjust gracefully to the load. Keep

us ever close to Thee and do Thou keep ever close unto us, that no day of any year be wasted. By Thy grace help us to live them out with strength and courage; through Christ. Amen.

FACE UP

Good Lord, help us to take some sin or carelessness that has not been faced, forgiven, and put away, and deal with it now in Thy presence. Help us to face it honestly, confess it, receive forgiveness, root it out, and mend whatever was strained or broken by it. Help us to put on the glasses of Thy presence and see things in focus, sharp and clear, and be no longer content with vagueness; through Christ. Amen.

GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

O Lord, forgive us if we have offended another and let us know the offence and the one offended so that we may ask pardon and do what we can to make it up. Keep our relationships thoughtful and considerate, being ever sensitive to the needs of others and ready at all times to go the second mile in word or deed; through Christ. Amen.

FEAR NOT

O God, ease the fears of our hearts while reading headlines and imagining possible actions beyond our knowing or control. Fill our minds instead with enough faith to continue living unafraid. Give us enough common sense to make the best of any moment in time, in the sure and certain hope that the world is thine and that whatever men do cannot at last thwart the coming of Thy kingdom; through Christ. Amen.

LIFE IS GOOD

O God, we thank Thee for life; for its colorful beauty all around—the flowers of the land, the saltiness of the sea, the

cleanness of the mountain air, and whatever is sensed that makes life wonderful. May awareness of these things overbalance whatever of ugliness and foulness brushes our senses. Lift our hearts and minds to Thee, O God, and keep Thou close; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

LOOK AND SEE

For the power to move, we thank Thee; for the ability to move from place to place and see new wonders, for the roving eyes, which can see near and far and all around, for the closeness to all parts of the world by flight in space or of imagination. For a whole, wide world to live in, we thank Thee, O God, and rejoice over every moment of living in it. Amen.

WALK IN FAITH

O Lord God, when tensions mount and fears plunge icy fingers into our hearts, hold us steady and keep us from panic, for we know that Thou art our God, who cares for us and art ever with us, and we need not fear or grow tense. As we declare our faith in the good God revealed in Jesus Christ as each morning comes, and as we face the day's turmoils and unkindness with Thee consciously present, help us to walk in faith each new hour and never doubt that Thou art near; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

THIS DAY

O God, we thank Thee for another day; for the light and for the promised warmth clear through to our hearts. Be it a lazy day or a busy day, hold us to moments of remembering that Thou art near to help and bless. O God, we thank Thee for another day. Amen.

BENEDICTIONS

*Now to Him who can strengthen us by Jesus Christ; who has revealed the secret purpose which after the silence of long ages has now been disclosed and made known on the basis of the Scriptures in the person of His Son; to the only wise God be glory through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.*¹

*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*²

Notes and Acknowledgments

A WORD ABOUT ISLANDS

1. In his autobiography, *The Living of These Days*, Harry Emerson Fosdick describes his island: "Some two thousand feet off the coast, with the deep ship channel intervening, lies Mouse Island. It is a lovely bit of typical Maine coastland some sixteen acres in extent, beautifully wooded, its rocky irregular shores inviting the trees down to the water's edge.

"The Fosdicks spent their first summer there in 1924, and during all the succeeding years the peace and beauty of that island have been a refuge and delight. I am writing these recollections now in my study on the end of Slim Point, with the sea on three sides and the woods on the fourth.

"It was the Maine coast, where my love of the out-of-doors had its complete fulfilment, and even amid the tensions of the city, dreams of Mouse Island have been salutary medicine.

"I long ago lost my heart to the sea. I tire of a lake. It may be beautiful, but it is always much the same. The sea, however—especially along a broken coastline like Maine—is endlessly varied, never twice the same, sometimes delectably lovely, sometimes tremendous and awe-inspiring.

"So our island has been to us an endless blessing." (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1956, pages 113-114.)

2. John Donne, *Devotions*, XVII.

3. Robert Froman, *One Million Islands For Sale*, Duell, Sloan & Pearce, New York, 1953.

4. Writing in *The Atlantic* under the title "The Age of Happy Problems," Herbert Gold says: "We cannot retreat from the world any more—we never really could—but we can look for our best gardens within the world's trouble. There we must give ourselves silence and space; we can see what the will wants; we can make decisions. Only then—having come to terms with our own particularities—can we give the world more than a graceless prefabricated commodity." (March, 1957, p. 61.)

5. So often this is like "Nonsuch Island," the name of an island near Bermuda which belies its name, for it does exist. Men long for islands but do not believe in them sufficiently to attempt a pilgrimage.

LENT BEGINS

1. Joel 2:12-13, from the Epistle for Ash Wednesday.
2. St. Matthew 6:16, from the Gospel for Ash Wednesday.
3. St. Matthew 6:17-18.
4. The two words, fasting and abstinence, are both used, but "fast" is a more inclusive term for spiritual disciplines than "abstinence."
5. Participate fully in your parish's Lenten program.
6. Ezra 5:8.
7. Revelation 1:3.
8. The Book of Common Prayer, p. 297.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 284-285.
10. Evelyn Underhill, *The School of Charity*, Longmans, Green & Co., New York, edition of 1954, combined with *The Mystery of Sacrifice*.
11. Ephesians 4:14.

FIRST WEEK OF LENT

1. The Hymnal 1940, Hymn 563.
 2. St. Matthew 26:41.
 3. It is customary in some churches to set up a "Rule of Life" for the Lenten season. While this rule varies, it usually includes fasting, penitence, almsgiving, prayer, and devotional reading. Many disciplines may be used to equip the Christian for the exacting life he must live in the world. Among them are disciplines of moods and appetites, of the body, of thought, of speech, of money, and of time. But all demand the discipline of rising early enough for an unhurried communion with God, before the rush of the day's work begins. For every man shall fail in all these disciplines if he attempts them in his own strength. (Adapted from the *Lee Abbey News Letter*, as quoted in the parish paper of Christ Church, Crouch End, London, *News From the Hill*, March, 1957.)
 4. St. Luke 18:1.
 5. The Hymnal 1940, Hymn 155.
 6. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,"
- LVII.
7. Evelyn Underhill, *Worship*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1937, p. 3.

8. *Ibid.*
9. Reprinted by permission of Coward McCann, Inc., from *The Rosemary Tree*, by Elizabeth Goudge, copyright 1956 by Elizabeth Goudge.
10. St. Luke 11:1.
11. St. Luke 11:2.
12. St. Luke 11:2-4.
13. The Book of Common Prayer, p. 20.
14. From title page of *Guide to Holy Island*.
15. I Thessalonians 5:17.
16. St. Thomas Aquinas.
17. A paraphrase from the Anaphora of the Syrian Jacobites, attributed to Severus of Antioch, quoted in Evelyn Underhill, *Worship*, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1937, p. 142.
18. Underhill, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
19. See Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, published by The Forward Movement, Cincinnati, Ohio.
20. Psalm 100:4.
21. *Sursum Corda*, The Book of Common Prayer, p. 76.
22. William Palmer Ladd, *Prayer Book Interleaves*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1942, p. 140.
23. The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 50-53.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
25. Evelyn Underhill, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*
29. Woman's Auxiliary Prayer.

SECOND WEEK OF LENT

1. St. John 7:17.
2. *The Lindisfarne Gospels* is a good example.
3. From an old Scottish Prayer Book.
4. The Book of Common Prayer, p. 56.
5. St. John 14:23-24.
6. St. John 8:47.
7. From: *The Scapegoat*, by Daphne Du Maurier. Copyright © 1956, 1957 by Daphne Du Maurier Browning, reprinted by permission of Doubleday & Company, Inc.

8. St. Luke 18:35-43.
9. Psalm 115:5.
10. Graham Greene, *The Potting Shed*, The Viking Press, New York, 1957.
11. Terence Rattigan, *Separate Tables*, Random House, Inc., New York, 1957.
12. St. John 9:25.
13. Ephesians 4:18; II Corinthians 4:4.
14. St. Luke 18:42-43.

THIRD WEEK OF LENT

1. I Peter 3:4.
2. The Book of Common Prayer, p. 67.
3. Proverbs 23:7.
4. David E. Roberts, *The Grandeur and Misery of Man*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1956, pp. v-viii.
5. Meyer Levin, *Compulsion*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1956.
6. Søren Kierkegaard, *Purity of Heart*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1948, p. 16.
7. St. Luke 8:15.
8. I Corinthians 7:29.
9. Reuel Howe, *Man's Need and God's Action*, The Seabury Press, Greenwich, Conn., 1953.
10. St. Luke 15:11-32.
11. The Hymnal 1940, Hymn 409.
12. Colin Wilson, *The Outsider*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1956.
13. Joel 2:12-13.
14. St. Luke 24:47.
15. St. Mark 1:4.
16. St. Mark 1:15.
17. Paraphrasing of E. V. Rieu's translation of St. Matthew 4:1-11, The Penguin Classics, Baltimore, 1953.
18. The Book of Common Prayer, p. 6.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
20. Romans 12:2.
21. II Corinthians 11:13.
22. St. Matthew 26:69-75.
23. Psalm 121:1.
24. "Facsimile of the Lindisfarne Gospels," *The Manchester Guardian Weekly*, February 14, 1957.

25. From exhibit description, British Museum.
26. St. John 1:5, Goodspeed's translation.
27. Psalm 119:105.

FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

1. J. R. Green, *Short History of the English People*, Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London.
2. Psalm 119:105.
3. Isaiah 40:8.
4. Genesis 1:1.
5. From an address by Roy McKay, head of religious broadcasting, B.B.C., London, April, 1957.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Jeremiah 1:4-10.
9. St. Luke 15:11-32.
10. Jeremiah 1:9.
11. St. Luke 15:17, 20.
12. Genesis 3:1-24.
13. Genesis 28:16-22.
14. St. Luke 10:25-37.
15. St. John 3:1-11.
16. Since the Lectionary in The Book of Common Prayer is extensive and complete and much too much to be read daily with full appreciation, a selection or miniature lectionary might prove a more helpful daily reading guide for the beginner. The second lessons at Evening Prayer for the Sundays and weekdays of Lent, for example. Or take the *Lenten Forward—day-by-day* and read the passage of Scripture suggested for each day. Once begun and fitted firmly into one's daily routine, the habit is easily continued.
17. Exodus 3:1-18, especially verses 2-6.
18. Acts 9:10-22.
19. Those who do not know its substance as Ananias did might begin with such books as *A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology*, by William Hordern, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1955; and *Christian Theology: An Ecumenical Approach*, by Walter M. Horton, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1955.
20. Acts 9:11, 17.
21. Isaiah 58:12.

22. Ruth 1:16.
23. Job 19:25.
24. St. Matthew 11:28.
25. Jeremiah 31:33.
26. Isaiah 9:2.
27. St. Luke 17:21.
28. Acts 1:8.
29. I Corinthians 13:13.
30. Lesslie Newbigin, *The Reunion of the Church*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1948, p. 127.
31. St. John 14:9.
32. Bulletin of St. Paul's Cathedral, Calcutta.
33. From *A Preface to Bible Study* by Alan Richardson, p. 8. Copyright, 1944, by The Westminster Press. Used by permission.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
35. Frederick C. Grant, *How To Read the Bible*, Morehouse-Gorham Co., New York, 1956.
36. Suzanne de Dietrich, in her booklet *Discovering The Bible*, World Council of Churches, New York, pp. 1-2.
37. Source unknown.
38. Isaiah 60:18.
39. Ephesians 2:14.
40. Reprinted by permission.
41. Kathryn Hulme, *The Nun's Story*, Little, Brown & Co., New York, 1956, p. 77.
42. St. Matthew 5:46-47.
43. St. Matthew 5:45.
44. The Hymnal 1940. Hymn 304.
45. St. Matthew 20:16.
46. Isaiah 60:18.
47. Ephesians 2:14.
48. E. Stanley Jones.

PASSIONTIDE BEGINS

1. Psalm 116:10, Version in The Book of Common Prayer.
2. *Ibid.*, verses 3-4, 6.
3. The Book of Common Prayer, p. 280.
4. The Hymnal 1940, Hymn 549.
5. The Book of Common Prayer, p. 170

6. *The Southwell Litany*, The Forward Movement, Cincinnati, Ohio.
7. The Book of Common Prayer, p. 75.
8. St. Matthew 28:20.
9. Acts 2:46.
10. John Heuss, *Do You Want Inward Power?* The Seabury Press, Greenwich, Conn., 1955.
11. Romans 16:5, paraphrased.
12. Acts 2:42.
13. James W. Hoffman, *Mission: U.S.A.*, Friendship Press, New York, 1956.
14. Acts 1:8.
15. The Book of Common Prayer, p. 75.
16. Negro Spiritual.
17. The Bishops' Pastoral, 1956, as reported in the *New York Times*, November 17, 1956.
18. St. John 9:4.
19. Source unknown.
20. The Book of Common Prayer, p. 291.
21. Author unknown.
22. St. John 1:39.
23. B. H. Streeter, *The God Who Speaks*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1936.
24. St. Matthew 16:15.
25. St. John 21:15.
26. St. John 14:6.
27. St. John 14:9.
28. St. John 10:30.
29. St. John 12:21.

HOLY WEEK

1. Lamentations 1:12.
2. St. Matthew 5:4.
3. St. Matthew 11:28, version in The Book of Common Prayer, p. 76.
4. Psalm 23:4.
5. Psalm 139:8, 10.
6. Psalm 22:1, St. Matthew 27:46.
7. St. John 14:1.
8. Deuteronomy 33:27.
9. Source unknown.

10. St. Mark 11:9.
11. St. Mark 11:3, 6.
12. St. Mark 9:7.
13. St. Matthew 12:30.
14. Dorothy Sayers, *The Man Born To Be King*, Harper & Brothers, New York, reissued 1949.
15. St. Mark 11:1-11.
16. *Benedictus qui venit*, St. Mark 11:9-10.
17. Psalm 8:3-4.
18. The title of a book by the Rt. Rev. William R. Moody.
19. I John 2:3, Goodspeed's translation.
20. Romans 12:5.
21. St. John 21:17.
22. Eugene O'Neill, *Lazarus Laughed*, Random House, Inc., New York, 1927.
23. I Corinthians 15:35.
24. I Corinthians 15:36.
25. I Corinthians 15:57-58.
26. I Corinthians 15:58.
27. St. Matthew 16:25.
28. Romans 6:11.
29. The Book of Common Prayer, p. 280.
30. James A. Pike and W. Norman Pittenger, *The Faith of the Church*, The Seabury Press, Greenwich, Conn., 1951.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Romans 6:23.
33. *Ibid.*

EASTERTIDE

1. Colossians 3:1.
2. I Corinthians 15:36.
3. Romans 15:33.

EXTRA PRAYERS FOR ANY DAY

1. Paraphrase of Romans 16:25-27.
2. Romans 15:13.

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